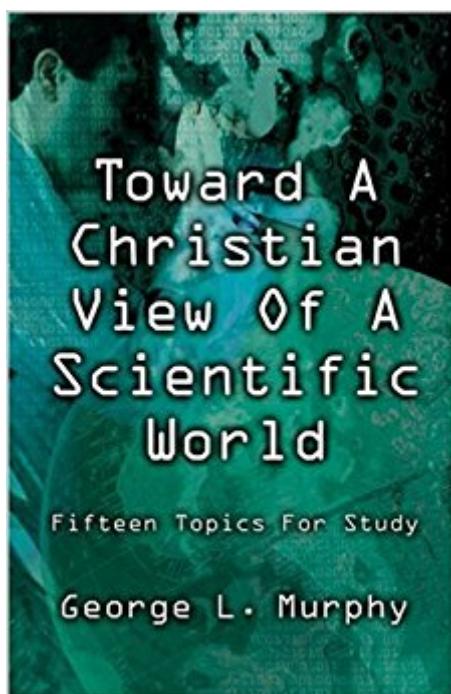


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Toward A Christian View Of A Scientific World: Fifteen Topics For Study



Synopsis

Modern science and science-based technology have changed traditional understandings of the world in profound ways. A pastor who is also a trained scientist draws on his diverse background to help readers put today's scientific knowledge in the context of Christian faith. Murphy sees the world described by today's science as the creation of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and technology and modern medicine as ways to carry out God's purpose for the world. This book is a useful tool for introducing readers to the crucial conversations and interactions now occurring between the fields of science, theology, technology, and ethics. It's a clear and accessible text that's appropriate for adult classes and lay groups of all levels. This comprehensive and readable work by a well-qualified and experienced scientist, theologian, and pastor fills a very important gap in the current literature regarding the new dialogue that has been emerging in recent years between science and religion.... It seeks to develop a Christian view of the world that is congruent with modern science. It includes discussions of the practical and moral implications of issues such as genetic engineering and medicine, and their implications for worship and prayer. David E. Arthur
George L. Murphy is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Ohio University, Johns Hopkins University (where he earned a Ph.D. in physics), and Wartburg Theological Seminary. He has taught at the University of Western Australia, Westminster College, Luther College, and Trinity Lutheran Seminary. Widely published in both scientific and religious periodicals, Murphy has received two awards from the Templeton Foundation for his papers on science and religion. A Lutheran pastor, Murphy is also the principal author of *Cosmic Witness* (CSS).

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Customer Reviews

"Toward a Christian View" is a highly recommended book. Murphy goes through nearly every single major bioethics question of today (with the exception of abortion), looking closely at how a Christian can respond to these scientific issues. He makes it clear in his introduction that he is not mandating *the* Christian view, or speaking of one definite scientific world. His title is purposeful- proposing *a* Christian view, and *a* scientific world. He wants to raise ideas and propose ways of thinking that get beyond the argumentation and hypocrisy, and really try to deal with the texts, both scientific and Christian. Highlights and topics include:
*Understanding how God controls nature. How He is present in nature sets up how we view His action in natural law and the scientific world.
*How we can know God. If God is knowable through nature as well as text, then there must be some order to things. This leads directly into
*The Scientific View of the World. How science perceives the world- as ordered and learnable. Thankfully
*God's action in the world is the same way. He could do anything He wants, but He generally limits Himself to logical action, so that science is possible, and the world is not arbitrary. Part of this is the idea that creation is good, as it says in Genesis 1, and a big part of being good is being logical.
*Reading the Bible. God acts now as he did in the beginning, using natural laws. He is present in every action, but most actions are also in accord with laws. Murphy also points out that there are many different forms of literature in the Bible, such as allegory, parable, myth, poetry, and even historical record. Particularly interesting is when he asks us to consider Psalm 104, the "other" creation story, that dare not speak it's name. What if it were the first creation story? How would we view the evolution/literal creationism debate then? Especially intriguing as it probably predates the written form of the Genesis 1 story, and possibly that of Genesis 2.
*The origin of the universe. Short chapter. An important part of this is looking at the doctrine of Jesus as Logos, also meaning logic. Since he is the foundation of all creation, then logic is in that foundation, and creation should make sense. (No stars or rocks created to give the appearance of age, etc.)
*The big topic, evolution and creation. Of particular interest is Murphy's addressing of the knotty problems of original sin and the development of evil, tying it closely to the development of our brains. This indeed becomes a foundational point of his book, as he shows how sin *must* be present if there is great intelligence.
*The Human universe. Here Murphy looks at the Weak and Strong Anthropomorphic Principles from a Christian perspective, and concludes that all of creation, and all of evolution, and all of the universe, was created for man. Well, one man- Jesus Christ. That's really an inescapable doctrine central to Christianity. Whether or not we had to exist in

this form is immaterial (no pun intended)- though Murphy suggests that it is likely that intelligence had to come about, in order to worship God.*Religion and the environment, and how much the Christian viewpoint has contributed to valuing nature. Humans always come first, but within nature, not against it. He discusses how the meaning of the Hebrew word for "dominate" was to care for, both by God's and Jesus' examples, as well as it's use throughout the rest of the Old Testament, and in the passages immediately around it's use in Genesis One.*The status of medicine. Learned something new here- Murphy uses Biblical passages to show how oil was used as a mild medicinal in the ancient world, and therefore he takes the rather small step that all the passages of the New Testament speaking of using oil with prayer for healing were all advocating using accepted medical practice of the day, along with the healing power of God. This is a powerful justification for the use of modern medicine and seeing, it too, as part of the miraculous.*Aliens, angels, and robots. Murphy covers everything, even looking at how God *could* come personally to other aliens, or what it means for a robot to have a soul. This chapter of course is highly speculative.*Religious themes in SciFi. Most SciFi assumes religion doesn't exist, or is degrading to it, as in the case of most of Star Trek. Murphy points out how the human culture comes across as rather bland in the future, but the highly religious Bajorans and Klingons are by far the most interesting and complete cultures presented to us. (And the Vulcans become the most interesting when we get beyond their logic and into their mysticism.) From there he goes on to look at SciFi authors who have raised important religious themes. Murphy is quick to point out that these aren't necessarily Christian or about a religion, but rather bring out the deeper questions that religion addresses.*Lastly Murphy looks at the future and the Church's mission in the world.In all of this Murphy doesn't go for the easy answers. He wrestled with the topics, and stays true to both science and the Bible. In the prologue he has high hopes for an audience of great breadth, but in truth, if you are not a Christian than this book will come across as quite foreign to you. However, if you are a Literal Creationist, then there may be much in this book that for the first time you will find convincing, as Murphy describes how God in Christ can be fully present in evolution. If you are a theistic evolutionist, there is still much here to challenge you and force you to contemplate.Indeed, one of the most helpful aspects of the book are the discussion questions at the end of each chapter, which can be used by individuals or groups. Wide ranging from philosophy to introspection to scripture study, Murphy asks us to go beyond simply reading, and let a book change our lives.

excellent

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