

Work.” In the complementary chapter, “Sacred Work,” they provide imagination for a renewed approach, in this case, a framework for understanding work as calling (chap. 3). This framework, demonstrated as a foursquare matrix, visibly denotes the extensive ways workers view calling: the x-axis delineates the meaning of work as *intrinsic* versus *extrinsic* to the work itself, while the y-axis distinguishes the locale of those the work serves as *beyond the workplace* or *within the workplace* (see fig. 3.1, p. 34, emphasis added). The authors offer each quadrant in the matrix as one way to understand calling. For example, if workers see labor as *intrinsically* meaningful *beyond* the workplace, they might articulate calling as serving the common good (e.g., an engineer providing safe water for a city). But if they see work as holding *extrinsic* meaning *within* the workplace, they would view calling primarily as serving others within the particular work context (e.g., a maintenance manager who hires formerly incarcerated individuals). Given that one’s work might fit within multiple quadrants, this matrix demonstrates a dynamic understanding of calling as articulated by participants and also lays the groundwork for considering the findings highlighted in the remainder of the chapter pairings.

These chapter pairings include movements from a common perspective of faith-and-work to a renewed approach including the movement from “Protecting Ourselves” to “Protecting Others” (chaps. 4 and 5); from “Focusing [only] on Individual Responsibility” to “Focusing on Systems Thinking” (chaps. 6 and 7); from “Restricted Roles for Women” to “Men and Women Flourishing Together” (chaps. 8 and 9); and from “Talking About Christian Faith” to “Living Principled Pluralism” (chaps. 10 and 11). The arc and flow of the book calls Christians out of a place of status-quo engagement between work and faith, and into a radical-embrace perspective, inviting Christians to consider the *imago Dei* and a hospitable posture toward colleagues, clients, supervisors, or employees regardless of their religious background, gender, race, or ethnicity. This reframes the conversation from how I might protect my rights as a Christian in the workplace to how I might protect my non-Christian colleague, or how I might work toward more just and equitable systems that cultivate flourishing for each person within the system.

In most chapters, the findings are discussed through charts, graphs, and in-depth interviews. Such data-rich evidence is welcomed since it gives voice to the variety of participants interviewed in their study—engineers, grocery store clerks, asset managers, librarians, credit union CFOs, corrections officers, nurses, paramedics, physicians, lawyers, teachers, social services workers, and more—while also encouraging the reader, regardless of his or her profession, to consider questions of calling and faith engagement in the workplace. The reflection questions and suggestions for church pastors and leaders underline the authors’ desire that each chapter serve as a

catalyst for deeper consideration, whether personally or from the pulpit.

For Christians who have considered the conversation about faith and work from an individual perspective rather than from a systems-thinking perspective, chapter 7 is a needed corrective. The research offered in chapter 8 regarding ways women have encountered restrictions in their work provides important insight and a voice for women who have experienced marginalization. However, at times the discussion of practical implications based on the research findings is limited in scope. For example, the chapter on “Protecting Others” could be improved by adding a discussion on the ways nonreligious workers or those from other religious backgrounds have experienced welcome or hospitality from Christian coworkers.

Who should consider reading *Working for Better*? This book is for people who carry questions about faith in the workplace and want to think deeply about how to live as faithful Christians in their work environment. But it is also for people who want to empathize with the experiences of nonreligious coworkers or colleagues from other faith backgrounds, and consider how others might experience Christians in the workplace. This book is for pastors or other leaders who want to shepherd their congregations to connect faith and work in meaningful ways. It is also for college students, graduate students, or adults in the early career stage and for those who mentor them, providing a catalyst for deeper reflection and conversation. As the culminating stand-alone chapter, entitled “Rest,” indicates, it is also for those who long to incorporate rhythms of Sabbath rest into their workdays. The Epilogue summarizes the authors’ intent well: “We want to see our scholarship and Christian thinking used to bring true changes to how Christians live out their faith at work” (p. 211). May it be so.

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HISTORY OF SCIENCE

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-26Utter>

RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND SCIENCE: A Reference Handbook by Glenn H. Utter. Bloomsbury, 2025. 264 pages. Hardcover; \$75.00. ISBN: 9781440881060.

Author and editor Glenn Utter offers a penetrating examination of the contours of the historical relationship between science and religion in the United States, including how that relationship continues to play out in the present day. As professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at Lamar University, he demonstrates his aptitude for political and legal studies throughout the book, looking at religious groups and individuals who

Book Reviews

attempt to influence science in contemporary society. He remains critical, but not antagonistic, of the influence of religious individuals and groups on science and presents religion in America in all its diversity and theological variety (briefly including non-Christian religions).

Utter divides the book into seven chapters: “Background and History”; “Problems, Controversies, and Solutions”; “Perspectives”; “Profiles”; “Documents”; “Resources”; and “Chronology.” The first two chapters briefly discuss some of the differing perspectives on the relationship between science and religion and the major historical confrontations that continue to unfold in the USA. This relationship is complex and not always appropriately understood or approached by either members of the scientific community or those in religious communities. In some instances, these two communities possess strikingly similar views on certain questions while disagreeing sharply on other perspectives.

Chapter three, entitled “Perspectives,” presents five essays by political science and sociology scholars addressing topics such as flat-earthers, religious attitudes toward the COVID-19 vaccine, and belief in extra-terrestrial life. Taken together, these show patterns linking fundamentalist religious beliefs to anti-science views. The reader may choose to skim through chapters four through seven, due to their glossary-like formats. However, these chapters hold a wealth of information about the varied approaches to the relationship between science and religion in America. The latter chapters address everything from concepts such as concordism and non-overlapping magisterium (NOMA), to movements such as the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) and intelligent design (ID). Utter even briefly discusses the American Scientific Association (ASA) and *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (PSCF) in chapters four and six.

Repeatedly, Utter uses legal debates to discuss how religion influences science, and vice versa, in the American court system. Through legal cases presented in chapter five, he makes it apparent that fundamentalist Christianity has posed (and continues to pose) a threat to the advancement of scientific research. The fact that the court system serves as an arbiter between religion and science need not jeopardize Christian or religious communities since science operates based on methodological naturalism. Christian groups who have tried to use the court system to “foist [their] religious beliefs on others” (p. 188) often remain more concerned with protecting what they perceive to be a Christian culture than with allowing science to operate as intended.

PSCF readers may find that Utter’s use of legal rulings looks amicably at the kind of approach to science and religion encouraged by ASA. For example, Utter quotes in chapter five (“Documents”) from the decision of Judge John E. Jones, in the 2005 *Tammy Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District et al.* trial that “[r]epeatedly ... Plaintiffs’ scientific experts testified that the theory of

evolution represents good science, is overwhelmingly accepted by the scientific community, and that it in no way conflicts with, nor does it deny, the existence of a divine creator” (p. 198). For the religious believer, this legal presentation of science and religious belief proves sobering and even encouraging. Religion, particularly orthodox religion, still retains a significant role to play in helping individuals and communities find ultimate meaning, while science helps people understand the true nature of observable reality.

Religious Belief and Science offers practical resources for Christians seeking to incorporate science-religion dialogue into the lives of their congregations. Chapters four (“Profiles”) and six (“Resources”) cover individuals and materials that can inspire and serve as discipleship tools. For example, Utter includes Greg Cootsona, who helped develop the Science for the Church web resource and the Science and Technology for Emerging Adult Ministries (STEAM) initiative. Other examples include theologian Ted Peters, who has published extensively on science and religion, and Naomi Oreskes, author of *Why Trust Science?*

The book could expand on the relationship between higher levels of education, religious beliefs, and correlating views toward science amongst the American public. For instance, one of the essays in chapter three addresses “Unitarian-Universalists and Science.” Jeffrey S. Victor writes, “The disproportionate level of college-educated membership among Unitarians may account for their positive attitude toward science. Unitarians have the highest percentage (67 percent) of any American religious group (except Hindus) who have a college or graduate school education (Pew, 2016)” (p. 103). Glenn Branch, in his chapter titled “The Evolution of Understanding the American Public’s Understanding of Evolution,” states, “one analysis found that among those who believe that the Bible is the word of God, 31 percent of those with less than a high school education, but only 10 percent of those with a graduate degree, accepted human evolution” (p. 116).

These two quotes suggest that Utter and the contributors in chapter three see fundamentalist religious beliefs as an obstruction to accepting evolution and other findings of scientific research (e.g., climate change). Although Victor’s assessment may seem contradictory to Branch’s statement that “10 percent of those with a graduate degree accepted human evolution,” they are both describing the idea that more liberal religious beliefs tend toward better acceptance of science. As Victor points out, 85% of Unitarians do not believe that the Bible is the word of God (p. 104). If Unitarians have a positive attitude toward science and higher levels of education, and those who believe the Bible is the word of God and have graduate degrees largely reject evolution, does this mean belief in the Bible as the word of God obstructs acceptance of science? Utter could expand a bit more, then, on whether

one simply must take on liberal religious beliefs to be more open to science.

Ultimately, Christian scientists, laypeople, ministers, atheists, agnostics, and practitioners of non-Christian religions gain a better understanding of the landscape of science and religion in American society by reading *Religious Belief and Science*. It may prove useful for classroom settings, particularly undergraduate or graduate level courses in philosophy, political science, American history, theology, and religious studies.

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PHYSICS

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-26QureshiHurst>

DECODING THE COSMOS: God, Physics, and the Search for Deeper Explanation by Emily Qureshi-Hurst. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2025. 188 pages. Hardcover; \$42.00. ISBN: 9781666785661.

Reminiscent of *Can a Darwinian be a Christian?* by Michael Ruse (Cambridge University Press, 2001), Emily Qureshi-Hurst, philosopher of religion and science at the University of Cambridge and self-declared atheist, neither affirms that science and faith are compatible nor that they are incompatible. *Decoding the Cosmos* is a summary of her reflections on how major Christian doctrines can be addressed by contemporary physics, drawing upon her engagement with respected theologians and scientists. She regrets the unfortunate hostility that has grown out of the harsh rhetoric from New Atheists such as Richard Dawkins. Having studied under Alister McGrath, she respects how scientists can have an intellectually sound sense that science is compatible with Christian faith. However, it seems odd that an atheist would have so much interest in this topic, especially since her audience is primarily Christian. Although I, as an evangelical Christian, agree with many of her assertions, I have significant objections on a few important ones.

The structure of the book is based on concepts central to Christianity: creation, design, providence, incarnation, and salvation. Qureshi-Hurst limits her scientific discussion to developments in modern physics that have implications for how we view these doctrines. Her introduction lays a foundation for an orthodox Christian faith position. However, she warns readers that today's concept of belief is not necessarily one that has always been held and that, to examine the intersection of physics and Christianity, we must rely on contemporary Western theology. This leads her to specify four catchy categories of the science-faith relationship: conflict, contrast, complementary, and complexity, the latter one arising from unclear definitions of each. She suggests that conflicts are typically between personalities, not necessarily between science and faith.

On the doctrine of creation, Qureshi-Hurst makes the strongest case for compatibility with modern physics. God is described as a necessary being who created a contingent universe. She focuses on two interpretive communities: young earth creationism (YEC) and old earth creationism (OEC). Big bang cosmology firmly establishes a cosmos that is about 13.8 billion years old. This conflicts with YEC, which relies on a literal reading of Scripture, concluding that the cosmos is only a few thousand years old. But the author points out that faith does not have to be this way. She groups all Christians who allow for some symbolic reading of the creation account in the OEC camp and then makes a case for compatibility between OEC and modern physics. I was disappointed that she does not differentiate concordist and non-concordist approaches to interpreting Genesis 1; yet overall, she stresses that the doctrine of creation can agree beautifully with prevailing scientific understandings that imply a moment of creation.

On the doctrine of design, Qureshi-Hurst takes on the teleological claim that nature exhibits intelligible design that points to a Creator. She argues that the debate has shifted away from the kind of design challenged by Darwin's theory of evolution via natural selection to a consideration of cosmic fine tuning. Following the weak anthropic principle (the universe must exhibit life-friendly tuning, or we wouldn't be here to observe it), Qureshi-Hurst suggests that the multiverse hypothesis is a compelling explanation for design. She offers an analogy, proposing two explanations for garden vegetables disappearing: a ghost coming at night to spirit them away or squirrels coming to eat them. The latter is more plausible, since we have observed squirrels. Thus, since we are familiar with universes, namely our own, the multiverse explanation is more plausible. This is a flawed analogy, in my opinion. Familiarity with squirrels is not analogous to familiarity with universes, since we are familiar with only one of the latter. I find the argument that simplicity favors a Creator over a multitude of unobserved universes more compelling, although I am aware of several Christian physicists who favor both a multiverse and a Creator.

With the doctrine of providence, Qureshi-Hurst shows more nuance. A personal God would not only create and sustain the universe but would also be active in the lives of humans. Historically, the scientific revolution raised questions about miracles and divine violation of natural law. Even John Polkinghorne, though fully accepting miracles, agreed that God does not act against himself.¹ He and fellow theologian and physicist Robert Russell proposed differing ideas to allow for miracles in a universe governed by God-ordained natural laws. Russell argues for non-interventionist objective divine action, which relies on the probabilistic interpretation of quantum mechanics, in which uncertainty is built into the microscopic realm,² whereas Polkinghorne appeals to chaos theory as a way around this dilemma. Qureshi-Hurst finds both approaches problematic; she claims that