

New Hope Church
Faith and Science Sermon Series Impact

Faith and science have rarely been viewed as complementary forces. Many view faith and science as, at best, immiscible entities or, at worst, competing forces. But is this negative interaction necessary? New Hope Christian Reformed Church recently set out to portray faith and science as synergistic systems in a series of five sermons on the interaction of faith and science. In these sermons science was used as a creational text that could illuminate more about the nature of God.

The impact a sermon series like this would have on a congregation is unknown, and as a result measures were taken to assess its effects. Three main measures were used to assess the impact of the sermon series: Sunday attendance, the before and after results of a questionnaire meant to measure an individuals opinions on faith and science, and qualitative written responses given by attendees.

Sunday attendance

Sunday attendance was measured by a headcount taken for each of the science sermons, excluding the first sermon on the kidney. This sermon was excluded because it occurred prior to the decision to measure the impact of the faith and science series. As a result only four values were averaged, and compared to the average attendance of four non-science sermons given at similar times.

Results show that the science sermons had an average attendance of 138 (SD=42.58) and that non-science sermons had an average attendance of 80.5 (SD=5.45). These results show a significant increase in attendance, with a p-value < 0.05 in a one-tailed t-test. Results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Sunday attendance

| Science sermons | | Non-Science sermons | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Date | Attendance | Date | Attendance |
| January 15 | 191 | January 30 | 85 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|
| (Epigenetics) | | | |
| April 22 (Geophysics) | 148 | February 26 | 80 |
| April 29 (Hydrology) | 90 | April 15 | 84 |
| May 6 (The Human Leg) | 123 | May 13 | 73 |
| | Avg. 138 | | Avg. 80.5 |

Faith and Science Questionnaire

Participants were given a questionnaire consisting of several demographic questions as well as 20 statements on faith and science. They were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree for each of the statements. Questions consisted of broad statements about the relationship between faith and science, as well as more focused questions that related to each of the sermon topics in the series. For example, a broad statement was, “there is a valid theological basis for using science as a way to see God’s truth”. One of the statements relating specifically to the human leg sermon was, “I consider the human leg to be a miraculous tool through which we can learn about the bioengineering mind of God”. A complete version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

After these 20 statements, participants were given a chance to write openly about any additional thoughts or opinions on the survey or the relationship between faith and science. A complete list of responses from Part 1 can be found in Appendix B. Part 2 of the survey, which was conducted after the fifth sermon in the series, also gave respondents the opportunity for additional comments, which can be found in Appendix C. These additional responses were combined from both portions of the survey and separated into categories positive or negative. These general ranking can be seen in Figure 1.

Additional Comment Categorization (%)

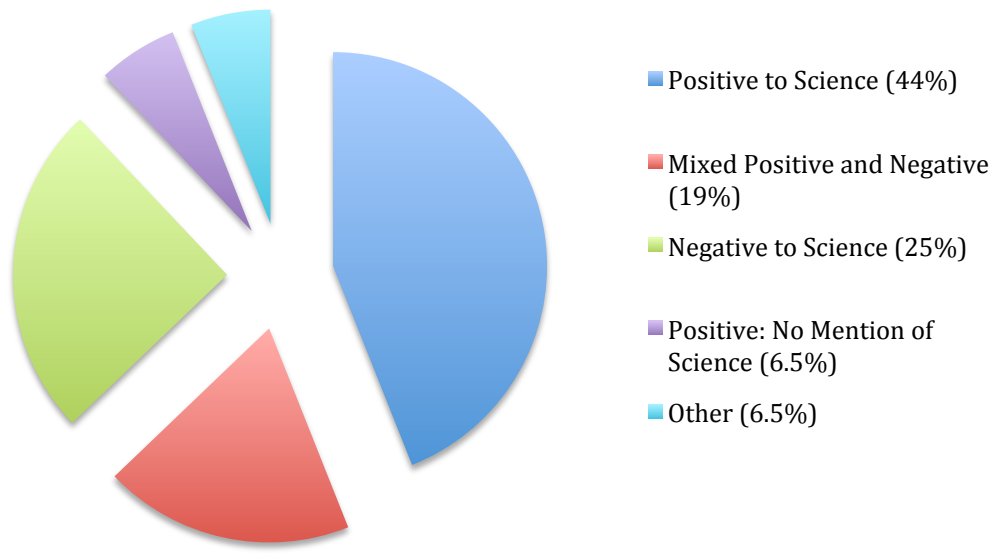


Figure 1: A pie chart showing additional comments arranged into general categories based on pattern of response being positive, negative, or other.

The responses from the 20 Likert scale ranking questions were averaged and compared to the responses given by those who had attended at least 3 of the 5 sermons after the sermon series had occurred. This was done as an average of all the questions and for the sermon specific statements.

The mean rating from before the sermon series occurred was 5.6 (SD=0.78). This corresponds to a rating somewhere between “somewhat agree” and “agree”, indicating that even before the series there was a strong consensus in this group that faith and science are not viewed in opposition. The mean rating of individuals who had attended after the series was 5.77 (SD=0.75). This marginal increase was found to be non-significant, with p-value > 0.05.

Responses to the sermon specific questions were then compared between those that attended the service specific to the statement and the overall average response prior to the specific sermon. The exception to this was the Kidney sermon as Part 1 was completed after the kidney sermon took place. In this case responses from those who attended the service where

compared to the responses of those who did not attend the service. These comparisons show that there was significantly more agreement to two of the ten questions. A list of the questions and the average responses can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Sermon specific questions

| Statement <i>* Indicates a reversed key item</i> | Average Rating Before | Average Rating After | Significance (p) |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| The role of the kidney in the body can be used to show God's often unrecognized presence and balance in the world. | <i>M</i> = 5.00 <i>SD</i> = 1.69 | <i>M</i> = 6.5 <i>SD</i> = 0.84 | 0.053 |
| When I think of the kidney I think of God keeping homeostasis (balance) in the world. | <i>M</i> = 4.13 <i>SD</i> = 1.73 | <i>M</i> = 6 <i>SD</i> = 1.26 | 0.037** |
| * I do not naturally consider the presence of God when I hear about genetics. | <i>M</i> = 4.50 <i>SD</i> = 2.04 | <i>M</i> = 4.88 <i>SD</i> = 1.73 | 0.593 |
| I can think of support for the claim, "the way our genes are expressed illuminates Biblical truth." | <i>M</i> = 5.39 <i>SD</i> = 1.44 | <i>M</i> = 6.38 <i>SD</i> = 0.92 | 0.024** |
| * Drilling for oil is ruining God's gift of creation. | <i>M</i> = 3.57 <i>SD</i> = 1.52 | <i>M</i> = 3.46 <i>SD</i> = 1.90 | 0.858 |
| I feel God gave us specific tools and techniques for us to use in order to find oil. | <i>M</i> = 5.35 <i>SD</i> = 1.57 | <i>M</i> = 5.85 <i>SD</i> = 1.52 | 0.312 |
| When I see the Bow River I think about why God has placed the river there. | <i>M</i> = 4.61 <i>SD</i> = 1.69 | <i>M</i> = 4.63 <i>SD</i> = 2.32 | 0.985 |
| I can think of ways through which the Bow River shows unique truths about God. | <i>M</i> = 5.59 <i>SD</i> = 1.26 | <i>M</i> = 6.00 <i>SD</i> = 1.69 | 0.530 |
| I consider the human leg to be a miraculous tool through which we can learn about the bioengineering mind of God. | <i>M</i> = 5.98 <i>SD</i> = 1.14 | <i>M</i> = 6.38 <i>SD</i> = 1.06 | 0.365 |
| When I see other people running I think of God's presence in the world. | <i>M</i> = 4.46 <i>SD</i> = 1.46 | <i>M</i> = 5.12 <i>SD</i> = 1.81 | 0.253 |

Open-Ended Responses

For both the Geophysics and Epigenetics sermons, attendees had the opportunity to answer some open-ended questions about the sermon. They were asked what about the sermon impacted them, if and how it caused them to think of God/Christianity in a different way, as well as any additional comments they had about the sermon.

Complete responses for the Epigenetics sermon can be found in Appendix D. The responses pertaining to the Geophysics sermon can be found in Appendix E.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that Sunday attendance increased for the faith and science sermons, compared to the attendance of non-science sermons. This indicates an increased interest in the science sermons evidenced by the greater number of attendees.

The results of the questionnaire are less conclusive. There was no significant increase in agreement towards statements that presented a favorable view of the relationship between faith and science before and after the sermon series was given. Even the sermon specific questions only had a significant increase in agreement in 20% of the cases. Possible reasons for this are the low number of responses for the final survey (n=14), as well as the high level of agreement to the statements prior to the survey. The high levels of agreement before the sermons indicate that there may have been a ceiling effect, where levels of agreement were too high before the survey was given, leaving little room for a significant increase to occur. The low number of respondents for the second portion of the survey also decreases the likelihood that any difference found would be deemed significant.

Explanations for the decrease in response rate may include the participant load of the surveys. There was a much lower response level for the Part 2 of the survey than Part 1, which

may indicate that the participant load was too high and that some individuals completing the survey in the beginning were no longer interested in continuing their participation by the last survey. In the future, it may be best to limit the survey to a “before” and “after” survey, eliminating the smaller open-response questionnaires. This would cut the number of surveys in half and help the participants maintain motivation and increase participation.

The responses to the additional comments section showed the highest number of participants had positive responses to the addition of science. The next highest category was negative responses to the science, followed by mixed opinions, and other. This sample suggests that most people saw the integration of science into a Sunday sermon as a positive experience. However, the high number of comments that spoke of science negatively suggests that the topic is still controversial.

The open-ended questions after the Epigenetics and Geophysics sermon were on average positive and showed personal responses to the sermons. The general positivity of the comments suggests a positive impact, though quantifying these responses is difficult.

Due to the increase in attendance and the overall tendency towards positive responses to the additional comments and open-ended questions, it would seem that the series of science sermons had a positive impact on the church congregation at New Hope Christian Reformed Church.

Appendix A

New Hope Church Survey on Beliefs About Faith and Science



As part of grant New Hope Church received from the John Templeton Foundation we agreed to conduct a survey to investigate the impact of the science sermon series. The following is a short survey meant to assess your beliefs and attitudes regarding the relationship between faith and science prior to the sermon series. We appreciate your participation and all individual information will be kept private.

The following questions are meant to give us an idea of who is completing the survey. Please check the appropriate response.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: _____ years
3. How often do you attend New Hope Church?
 - First time 1-5 times Several times per year
 - About once a month Most Sundays
4. How did you hear about the sermon series?
 - New Hope Church announcements
 - Friends or family
 - New Hope Church website
 - I was unaware of the sermon series
 - Other: _____

Please use the scale below to answer the following questions.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 = Strongly Disagree | 4 = Neither Disagree nor Agree | 5 = Somewhat Agree |
| 2 = Disagree | / Unsure | 6 = Agree |
| 3 = Somewhat Disagree | | 7 = Strongly Agree |

| Question | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| There is valid theological basis for using science as a way to see God's truth. | | | | | | | |
| I look at science as a means through which God is speaking His truth to us today. | | | | | | | |
| Science can show us unique truths about God that would be hard to find from other sources. | | | | | | | |
| The role of the kidney in the body can be used to show God's often unrecognized presence and balance in the world. | | | | | | | |
| Science can be a constant reminder of God's presence. | | | | | | | |
| I do not naturally consider the presence of God when I hear about genetics. | | | | | | | |
| When I see the Bow River I think about why God has placed the river there. | | | | | | | |
| By being religious we must ignore many scientific findings. | | | | | | | |
| I consider the human leg to be a miraculous tool through which we can learn about the bioengineering mind of God. | | | | | | | |
| I find it difficult to see God's truth revealed through science on my own. | | | | | | | |
| Drilling for oil is ruining God's gift of creation. | | | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Science and religion are natural counterparts. | | | | | | | |
| I feel Science disproves there is a divine Creator. | | | | | | | |
| When I think of the kidney I think of God keeping homeostasis (balance) in the world. | | | | | | | |
| I can think of support for the claim, “the way our genes are expressed illuminates Biblical truth.” | | | | | | | |
| When I hear of a scientific finding I think of a divine Creator. | | | | | | | |
| When I see other people running I think of God’s presence in the world. | | | | | | | |
| Science can act as a parable of God’s truth. | | | | | | | |
| I can think of ways through which the Bow River shows unique truths about God. | | | | | | | |
| I feel God gave us specific tools and techniques for us to use in order to find oil. | | | | | | | |

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments.

Thank you for your participation! Please place your completed survey in the envelope at the information table.

Appendix B

New Hope Church Survey on Beliefs About Faith and Science – Part 1 Additional Comments Section

Female – age 15 - attends about once a month

New Hope is a great church because they help me understand Gods presence in our world in the present day.

Male – age 48 – attends several times per year

I think the theory of evolution is bad science. If Science is done right it can do great things.

Male – age 49 – attends most Sundays

Great idea to combine science and faith - they do not need to be seen as mutually exclusive

Female – age 31 – attends most Sundays

I am very excited about our trip to the Science Centre. Thank you Templeton Foundation!!

Female – age 54 – attends most Sundays

Exploring God's presence through science, the human body, the environment or anything else in this world helps me to understand a little bit more about God. It helps me understand the bible and connect it to life today.

Female – age 50 – attends about once a month

God is the creator of all things. I believe Science is a great way to learn how He possibly put it all together! There may also be areas that God does not want us to understand total just believe. We must be careful with the information learned through Science that it is not misused. God is good He would not want us to use the knowledge He gives us/ allows us to understand, incorrectly. Looking forward to the series! Regarding the first question; I may only attend Hew Hope once a month, on average, but will often follow via U-tube to stay in touch!

Female – age 43 – attends most Sundays

In response to the question “I feel God gave us specific tools and techniques for us to use in order to find oil”: Knowledge of something does not give permission to act on it...it does increase our responsibility for our actions and our potential culpability for misuse of our knowledge.

Female – age 35 – attends most Sundays

Science is a form of worship of God because it's a respectful observation and study of creation. However, the goals or outcomes of scientific inquiry can be for good or evil/destruction. The outcome/product of scientific inquiry – new methods, new tools, new machines, etc., can be used for good or evil – to save life/creation or destroy/dishonor it. Humans must discern the best use of science for the preservation/honoring of life/creation in the long run and guard against the use of science for destruction/death/immoral profit in the short-term. A bullet can be used to hunt an animal and feed hungry people or it can be used to murder a person for destruction and war.

Male – age 35 – attends most Sundays

Science and spirituality (in my view) are not mutually exclusive. Science and religion can be, if the doctrine dictates it. This doctrine is not what I believe. Science and spirituality are correlative. This relationship is what attracted me to

this church originally and it enriches my relationship with God. Far too many churches I've been to have the mentality that (for instance) evolutionary theory is un-Christian. Even as a child that really bothered me.

The fundamental point is: God made it. How he did it can be observed through the lens of the scientific method. We can't use science thought to evaluate faith because science needs objective, repeatable processes to observe; a data point of one does not indicate a trend (tough to explain, sorry).

Male – age 34 – attends most Sundays

I have struggled with this topic a lot in the past and after a lot of self-study and research, have come to the conclusion that instead of having science and faith locked in a life and death struggle I have learned that the one can, and most often does, illuminate the other. I feel that as Christians, we shouldn't be afraid of science and what might come to light through research. But that at the same time as scientists, we shouldn't be so quick to discount what the Bible has to say about life and how things work together. Faith and science are both things that are constantly evolving and should be used together to create a bigger and better picture.

Male – age 33 – attends most Sundays

I find the thought of an either/or argument to God/science somewhat humorous.

Appendix C

New Hope Church Survey on Beliefs About Faith and Science – Part 2 Additional Comments Section

Male – age 44 – attends most Sunday – came to Geophysics, Hydrology, and a Runner's Leg

Found that pastor backed away from breaching controversial issues. Also find that pastor only discusses the ways that God is revealed through his vast creation. John rarely, if ever, discusses the ways that the man's fall is also revealed and mixed up in God's creation. It is critical that theology has this balance. We won't be prepared to truly ask for forgiveness unless we confront our fall. Science is a view onto creation and also reflects the consequences of man's fall, now that would be an interesting sermon.

Male – age 25 – attends several times per year – came to Geophysics

You are misusing science and replacing the Bible with science. You are confused as to how to deal with science. We are to look at the world of science through the lens of the Bible not look at the Bible through the lens of science. Most scientist today are atheist using science as an evangelical tool to confuse and convince people that science solves all problems and God doesn't exist. Science viewed correctly i.e. through the lens of faith and Bible can be used for good but mostly ends up encouraging people to replace Biblical thought and faith with faith in science.

Female – age 43 – attends most Sundays – came to Geophysics, Hydrology, and a Runner's Leg

I'm trying to figure out why this series has bothered me so much. I think it is because, while I believe God's truth is everywhere & in everything, some things are much better communicators of it than others. Science can certainly reveal truth about God to us. But on its own it can't do the job very well. If it could, our Scientists couldn't help but be our priests, spiritual teachers & pastors and we know many people of science cannot even recognize God exists. If it could, with each scientific breakthrough would come a corresponding spiritual one, but unfortunately, greater knowledge does not give greater understanding. Going to church to hear about the human leg, for instance, had me coming away feeling like I learned a little about the leg, but less about God. I came away hungry to connect with God, like church got in the way rather than facilitated this. I can't get the same level of truth in the general world that I can from other more "religious" things like Scripture, listening prayer, meditation, talk with friends about spiritual matters, reading books on spiritual themes, worship & often church. I have come away on Sunday feeling like I really wanted to connect with God, to learn deeper truths, to renew my mind with a divine perspective. I totally missed the spiritual truths in the series. Has it asked too much of science?

Female – age 54 – attends most Sundays – came to Epigenetics, Geophysics, Hydrology, and a Runner's Leg

This was a fabulous series. Our church believes that God is in everything. These messages gave me more great examples of what "everything" includes. Thanks to all who made these possible.

Female – age 28 – Attends about once a month – viewed all 5 sermons

Excellent series. Although we did not attend all the services, we watched the ones online that we didn't. Thank you for bringing new light to the scientific world!

Appendix D

Open-Ended Responses from the Epigenetics sermon

1. What about the sermon on epigenetics impacted you?

Male – age 57 – attends several times per year

That epigenetics even existed!!!...so much more than the already complex DNA that we have become familiar with.

Male – age 59 – attends most Sundays

How DNA cannot only be passed on, but how the active and non-active DNA can impact future generations in a family.

Female – age 15 – attends about once a month

It impacted me because it taught me that what I do now and all the habits I have and all the genes I use will get carried down to my kids. It made me think that I also need to be wise when doing things because if I do bad things it can be passed down to my kids.

Female – age 41 – has attended 1-5 times

That there is actually scientific proof about the whole nature versus nurture.

Female – age 37 – attends most Sundays

I found it quite fascinating actually. The information was well presented and very easy to understand. The tie-in to the spiritual message was logical. It was actually quite empowering to think of the control we do have over our own legacy. And it was reassuring to think that God is committed to loving our families for thousands of generations. I like the science series a lot. It has been eye-opening to understand that there are miracles going on within us all the time.

Female – age 49 – attends most Sundays

That we've only begun to scratch the surface on the intricacies of God's creation (in this case, humans). Also, how God's word is always tied to his creation, like the way epigenetics mirrors the Honour your Mother and Father commandment.

Female – age 46 – attends most Sundays

The intricacies of god and how he has created each person. Also how the research in epigenetics is showing that certain behaviours or tendencies are genetic, whereas they once were not considered to be.

Female – age 42 – attends about once a month

The fact that my teenage years could have had an impact on my child.

Female – age 48 – attends most Sundays

The fact that we are impacted by our genes, but also that fact there is some choosing/living that we can affect on our genes.

Male – age 33 – attends most Sundays

It was awesome to get a glimpse into field of science even if it was just a brief overview. Not often does one bump into such a topic in the regular routine of life.

Female – age 35 – attends most Sundays

The idea that God has set rules/programs for our bodies, even our genes, so that they work best according to our bodies' needs. That which isn't needed is put away and not used.

Female – age 54 – attends most Sundays

How our decisions impact our children and future generations through our DNA.

Male – age 50 – attends most Sundays

The effect we have on our kids.

Female – age 65 – attends most Sundays

It's a new area for me. I knew nothing about it.

Male – age 58 – has attended 1-5 times

It resonated with the passages of Scripture Pastor John referred to especially Exodus 20:4-6 which came to mind before he made the reference. It also resonated with things my wife (a nutritionist) has often said about how what we eat in our lifetime has consequences for our offspring. The message reaffirmed how science helps affirm Scriptural truths and vice a versa. I think it will help me also better explain what the Bible means in saying that God punishes the children for the sin of the parents. There is actually a lot of grace despite how harsh that may initially sound.

Male – age 61 – attends most Sundays

The idea that genetic information can be 'hidden' and not used and that this can be passed down from generation to generation.

Male – age 33 – attends most Sundays

The idea of God's goodness evidenced through science.

Female – age 34 – attends most Sundays

How little we know about ourselves and the world around us and how the scripture has told us about epigenetics before we knew what it was.

Female – age 50 – attends most Sundays

This message was a real eye-opener. To think that we are determined by our parents and yet not totally. Nature or nurture? Turns out it may be both.

Male – age 35 – attends most Sundays

We pass on our practiced strengths and weaknesses to our children (and inherit tendencies from our parents), but we are not bound by them.

Male – age 44 – attends most Sundays

How epigenetics impacts my life and the life of my children. The idea that my choices are imprinted in my genes to future generations.

Female – age 52 – attends about once a month

It was interesting to me to think about the importance of our genes but also the impact of our choices on the next generation. A bit scary!

Female – age 27 – attends most Sundays

I really enjoyed the epigenetics sermon. It was so interesting!! Enjoy learning new things and how it is worked into our faith

Female – age 42 – attends most Sundays

That we can affect our genetics

Female - age 53 – has attended 1-5 times

Confirmation of god's promise of passing on sin to 3rd+ 4th generations

Female – age 42 – attends most Sundays

I was impacted by the extent in which we are affected by our family influence. It is stunning to realize just how much our children are influenced by our physical choices.

Female – age 53 – attends about once a month

The cutting edge, controversial science that requires people to sit up and pay attention to their actions and the impact on other lives.

Female – age 29 – attends about once a month

The sermon definitely gave me an appreciation for approaching and viewing the natural world with both a sense of wonder as well as in harmony with the scientific understanding that I currently have of "how things work". I don't think I have ever viewed science and religion as mutually exclusive, but at the same time, it's rare that I reflect on how they fit together or can complement each other. I found this sermon to be a good introduction and I look forward to seeing how the rest of the lecture series will build on the concept of science and religion working together to explain the world.

Female – age 47 – attends most Sundays

The visual of the string of yarn and ball of yarn explaining epigenetics really helped make what it is clear to me. The idea of how we influence future generations positively and negatively and how that relates to the 2nd commandment was very cool.

2. Did this sermon make you think about God/Christianity in a different way? If so, how?

Male – age 57 – attends several times per year

The complexity of our design magnifies my belief in creation.

Male – age 59 – attends most Sundays

Yes and no. As a believer, but a human, I still have trouble getting my mind around God's enormity, and the fact that He has "his finger" in everything, whether we know/accept it or not. How can we as believers try to figure Him out? We can't, but we still "try". Although I now understand that active/inactive DNA can be passed on (scientifically proven per Carlo), I have a hard time relating that to John's biblical verses (I can't recall them) where bad traits will be passed on for 1,000s of generations, and good ones for 3 or 4 generations? My memory escapes me. Sorry.

Female – age 15 – attends about once a month

It didn't really make me think about God/Christianity in a different way but it did help my understanding of God.

Female – age 41 – has attended 1-5 times

Just that we are all part of God's plan even earlier on.

Female – age 37 – attends most Sundays

Not in a different way no. But it helped to reinforce my beliefs.

Female – age 49 – attends most Sundays

Not really in a different way, just reminded me of the vast, unknowable complexness of God. And that's comforting when comparing that to the little things that trouble me - I know he's way bigger than that.

Female – age 42 – attends about once a month

Yes, loved the demonstration that God is in all and that what is in the Bible might just be more literal than we sometimes think; i.e.: 3-4 generations of "payment" for the sins of the parent.

Female – age 48 – attends most Sundays

It was a great reminder that in the smallest parts of our lives/bodies, God is at work. Unaware to us and sometimes to scientists, God's presence is built-in! I loved that fact that as humans we are still discovering more about how God has created us and knit us together in the womb.

Male – age 33 – attends most Sundays

The verified link between how DNA can be passed on from parents to children & more specifically how changes can take place throughout a parent's life that alters the type/kind/sequences of DNA that is passed on was very interesting. Made me think of the combination of our free will vs. God's will in our lives.

Female – age 35 – attends most Sundays

No. I already think about God as the 'programmer' behind the order I see in biology, nature, the universe.

Female – age 54 – attends most Sundays

I feel like I have even more questions about how God created us to be such complex and high functioning beings. We have the capability to delve into each part of God's creation and little by little understand a tiny bit more. For every discovery made God has thousands more to be explored. The "wonder" of God keeps growing.

Male – age 50 – attends most Sundays

Yes, it put some meat on the bones of the bible passage John talked about.

Female – age 65 – most Sundays

We obviously are so far behind God's knowledge and all this just highlights how we are learning little by little tiny amounts of His unfathomable knowledge. I love bringing new knowledge to the table realizing God is leading us. We're just beginning in this. It's funny how some people think God can't keep up with science when he was the inventor. It's like the computer gives us an idea in a crude fashion of how the Holy Spirit can interact with everybody. This sermon just gave us an inkling of a new area where God has always been.

Male – age 58 – has attended 1-5 times

Mostly it solidified and reinforced what I already understood about God/Christianity.

Male – age 61 – attends most Sundays

It made me more aware of the way God is working in the world.

Male – age 33 – attends most Sundays

Yes

Female – age 50 – attends most Sundays

Well there was certainly the wonder part - imagine a God who determined how our genes work - something we are just figuring out. And a God who has taken a very complex system and made it so efficient. (the bundling of genes that likely aren't needed) Yet so responsive depending on your unique life (the ability to access those bundled genes if you need them). But also, God has given us instructions (the Bible) although we may not understand everything now - we can be confident that it is significant and meaningful. This speaks to the mystery that is often present in my belief in God. I might not understand but that is OK.

Male – age 35 – attends most Sundays

Sure, God designed the elements (people included) of the world to be quite dependent on each other and on Him.

Male – age 44 – attends most Sundays

It has always been my belief that God is the creator and author of science and scientists. What made me really think with this message is how mysterious and how complex we are created to cope with our natural and human environment. That every child is already wired to have experiences and coping mechanisms.

Female – age 52 – attends about once a month

No, not in a different way but just made more sense and seemed more relevant.

Female – age 27 – attends most Sundays

Yes, just at how incredible and complex God is

Female – age 42 – attends most Sundays

No, not really

Female – age 53 – has attended 1-5 times

No, not at all, God is bigger and better than earthly sciences. It has already been written in His book.

Female – age 42 – attends most Sundays

Not particularly, it did remind me of God being the architect of all things, most importantly - us.

Female – age 53 – attends about once a month

The connection to generational shortcomings and God is a unique take on God's description of wrath for 3, 4 generations.

Female – age 29 – attends about once a month

I'm not sure - I definitely will pause more to consider how God works in the world. In the past, for example, I don't think I ever would have thought of the kidney as an example of God demonstrating his capability for homeostasis. But after the talk, I think I might have a greater appreciation for how God works and how science gives us an intellectual understanding of this.

Female – age 47 – attends most Sundays

Not in a different way as I am at new hope every Sunday and have been hearing messages like this on different topics fairly often but in a new way - in understanding a bit about epigenetics and then seeing how God can be known a bit more through the "yarn" that my parents thought I would need or not need.

3. Did you come across anything while exploring the science centre where you experienced God? Explain.

Male – age 57 – attends several times per year

Witnessing the beautiful interaction between attendees...all with a need to explore, to know, to create...following the blueprints of our designer.

Male – age 59 – attends most Sundays

I had to leave after the sermon to do NHC volunteer stuff, so I didn't get a chance to experience the SC.

Female – age 15 – attends about once a month

I thought of God when I was going around the earth part of the science center.

Female – age 41 – has attended 1-5 times

Just loved the kids having fun and made me feel we are all one community.

Female – age 37 – attends most Sundays

In the sense that I got to watch to beauty of discovery with my kids for sure! It was also nice to share the fellowship outside of church.

Female – age 42 – attends about once a month

All of it.

Female – age 48 – attends most Sundays

Had a very fun time exploring the "reaction time" exhibit and was faced with the reality that each member of my family is uniquely created by God with different abilities (and reaction times!). This uniqueness was further evidenced in the energy producing exhibits that required pure brute strength... each is gifted differently (some with strength, some without!). When experimenting with many of the hands-on exhibits, I had a sense of being the creator (small /c/), exploring what would happen if variables were changed. There was pleasure in that, as I sense God also takes pleasure in creating!

Male – age 33 – attends most Sundays

There isn't really anything that can't be looked at through the lens of this question. Man's creativity (creative form with the innate ability to create) given from God, & God's creativity found in man living out it's existence in form & function are apparent in all the exhibits @ the science center.

Female – age 35 – attends most Sundays

Yes, the jars filled with coloured water. The light coming through them from the adjacent window made me think about how our perspectives affect how we perceive things. The light is refracted & reflected through the coloured water. I also thought about how each jar could represent a memory and the shelves a storehouse of memories. Or each jar could represent an emotional ingredient. For each moment, an individual pours out a certain amount of each emotion in just the right combination.

Female – age 54 – attends most Sundays

The beauty of sunsets and sunrises. Realizing how we are all created in God's image but we are all so very individual. Watching children being drawn to a certain exhibit while not being at all interested in others. How can we all be unique?

Male – age 50 – attends most Sundays

Not that I can think of

Female – age 65 – attends most Sundays

It was quite joyous. I love to see other Christians enjoying science and not feeling the need to compartmentalize. I met someone from a former church I attended who had come to this service and was so enjoying it. It was a healthy atmosphere. I took a baby to the baby area and it was such fun to see how he was learning there. It's a microcosm of this world which can be joyous to explore.

Male – age 58 – has attended 1-5 times

There was a feeling of community amongst largely young families all enjoying a fun and interesting outing with their children/grandchildren.

Male – age 61 – attends most Sundays

I thought the Science Center was very well done. The complexity, yet simplicity, of the way the world works always amazes me and makes me think of the one who put it all together- God.

Female – age 50 – attends most Sundays

The jars of colored water. The exhibit asks you to look at the sky and then find a jar of colored water that matches best. There aren't any that match exactly - the sky is too complex and ever changing - something you don't notice until you stop and really look. God made the sky and it is this constant motion of color and cloud and pattern - something we can't create or recreate, but it is a visual gift for those who stop and look.

Male – age 35 – attends most Sundays

I did not visit the centre following the service due to prior commitments.

Male – age 44 – attends most Sundays

I just had this feeling as though travelling at 30,000 ft and look down at all these marvels of science and thinking "God you are amazing for creating all this, and letting us dream, imagine, and experiment to learn more and more, and evolve further, and get closer to an understanding of our creator."

Female – age 52 – attends about once a month

Not one thing in particular but mainly the overwhelming impression of how great God is, how amazing, beautiful and complex his creation is, and how little we know and understand.

Female – age 42 – attends most Sundays

Loved it! It's all about God and his creation and the senses he blessed us with

Female – age 53 – has attended 1-5 times

Basically that our brains and our behaviours are so complicated that the science centre falls far short of showing any of that.

Female – age 53 – attends about once a month

God is everywhere and I experience those connections regularly. Praise be to God from whom all blessings flow. The world is an amazing, intricate place full of wonder- just like God!

Female – age 29 – attends about once a month

Probably not - I felt connected to the idea of experiencing God through epigenetics during the lecture/sermon, but I felt like our time at the Science Centre was disconnected from the talk in some way. I wish I could have been more reflective while moving through the exhibits, but it was hard to appreciate with so much activity. I wonder if a reading guide with questions for reflection at certain exhibits would have prompted me to think more on this?

Female – age 47 – attends most Sundays

There was a mirror that when you moved the angle of it changed the sound of your voice. In the gift shop there was a megaphone thing that also altered the sound of your voice. Made me think that I can hear God's voice in so many different places and that it is always his voice but it might sound different through epigenetics than it does through the kidney etc.

4. Any additional comments?

Male – age 57 – attends several times per year

Many thanks to the John Templeton Foundation and the Calgary Science Center for this very unique opportunity to further explore ourselves and our world!

Male – age 59 – attends most Sundays

1. I think John has made too many comments over the last weeks/months about how great it is to have Templeton grant money, and that we should "go back to the well" more often. It almost sounds like he wants to "milk it for all it's worth", and I wonder how Templeton staff would react if they heard his comments, if they listened to the sermons on-line. 2. I would have liked it much better if Carlo had have had the opportunity to "respond" to the sermon. As a scientist with a Christian wife (I don't know if Carlo is Christian or nor, but I imagine he is), I wanted to hear how Christianity and science responded to the same information. We heard how John responded. Carlo did not respond/have a chance to respond. Carlo's presentation presented "just the (secular?) facts" and gave no insight into how a (Christian) scientist related the facts to his Christian beliefs, and what role God played in everything.

Female – age 15 – attends about once a month

I thought that it was very nice to go out on a "field trip" with the church and I found that it was very worthwhile.

Female – age 41 – has attended 1-5 times

Loved how the scientist made his talk simple and how Pastor John was able to expand on it and tie it into Christianity.

Female – age 37 – attends most Sundays

Really appreciate the opportunity!! Thank you!

Female – age 42 – attends about once a month

Great, do more of this. Fantastic. Invite media next time!

Female – age 48 - attends most Sundays

Thanks for the amazing gift of a chance to see God in the Science Centre and all the opportunities there were to connect with our church community throughout the afternoon of exploring!

Male – age 33 – attends most Sundays

It would have been/ would be nice to have gotten/get a list of supplementary reading on the topic of epigenetics. Something a layperson could sink his/her teeth into & not have to Google every 3rd word. Something along the lines of epigenetics for dummies. It's an interesting topic that has far reaching implications, it would be nice to have a professional recommend readings that would be helpful to shed some more light in the topic.

Female – age 35 – attends most Sundays

Thank you for exploring God's presence in science. He made everything- even the rules for the universe, the study of which we call science.

Female – age 54 – attends most Sundays

Thank you for this eye opening experience. It blended church with the greater Calgary community, and provided an opportunity to experience an exciting new science facility in Calgary. I invited a friend to join me and also had a chance to catch up with former New Hope members who were drawn to the service.

Female – age 65 – attends most Sundays

Thank you for the thought and time which went into this. I did miss the music however but understand it would have been very difficult to have.

Male – age 58 – has attended 1-5 times

Extremely well done. Glad to see the good turn out. The science was kept simple and mostly understandable.

Female – age 34 – attends most Sundays

I met and spoke to more people from New Hope wandering through the science centre than I do on a typical Sunday at church...not that New Hoper's aren't the friendly type; in fact they were the ones to approach me and my family group to say 'hi'. It was a great way to network with the community!

Male – age 35 – attends most Sundays

The texts spoke to each other very well.

Female – age 52 – attends about once a month

This was a really worthwhile activity that we enjoyed with friends and family members. It gave us the opportunity to invite friends who are not attending NHC and talk about it with them.

Female – age 53 – has attended about 1-5 times

Good to hear presentation from a scientist, who said that it is very obvious God is the creator and that it is exciting to study that.

Female – age 42 – attends most Sundays

It was so refreshing to sit in an auditorium amongst so many people aligned by/with faith. The professor - Carlos- was lovely and he and Pastor John worked very, very well together. Fabulous Sunday - reaffirms my desire to be at a church that things through such progressive concepts.

Female – age 53 – attends about once a month

I appreciate hearing about topical, science issues that provoke thought. I truly enjoyed my entire experience at the science center. Thank you :)

Female – age 29 – attends about once a month

I actually felt like this sermon could have gone into more depth, both in Carlo's presentation as well as in the sermon that followed. I personally find this a fascinating field, and I also really enjoy the melding of science with faith. I took a couple courses, years ago, through St. Joseph's College at the University of Alberta that addressed science and religion and I think you could really explore this even more. I think that it is amazing that New Hope Church was able to get this grant and hold the service at the Science Centre. What an amazing looking building, and what a unique way to engage people in the church! Although we were disappointed in the Science Centre exhibitions, this is in no way the fault of New Hope Church and the Templeton Grant money was well worth it. However, I'd recommend exploring other "field trip" sites for future services, as we felt that we probably wouldn't choose to go back to the Science Centre on our own. Maybe there could be exploration behind finding God's work through art, wildlife, etc.?

Female – age 47 – attends most Sundays

Such a great time! Great community building but also a great way to understand different people (and how they reflect God) as you watch them interact with the science stations.

Appendix E

Open-Ended Responses from the Geophysics sermon

1. What about the sermon on geophysics impacted you?

Female – age 46 – attends most Sundays

How geophysics is a "God" thing, and how science and religion can agree on creational issues. How we can predict the future by looking at the past both in geophysics and in our lives.

Female – age 15 – attends most Sundays

That God is ever present.

Female – age 28 – attends about once a month

How science and religion truly work together. Great job done by the presenter and Pastor John.

Male – age 61- attends most Sundays

The billion year history of the earth and the intelligence behind everything.

Female – age 53 – attends most Sundays

The depth to God's existence and its everlasting meaning. 4.6 billion years of the Earth and the forethought of God to ensure the needs of the Earth. How what is past can show us what is now. That there is more to meaning than what we can often see.

Female – age 57 – attends most Sundays

-The alpha and omega part: how big a time frame that is when you look at the age, layers etc. of the earth.

-Seeing the visual of the Great Barrier Reef and the underground reef - God making the old new and also the connection of seeing God in the past and present

Male – age 56 – attends several times per year

Alignment of science and biblical revelation. The awesome dimension of geologic time and how that reflects the true scope of creation. The beauty of geophysicists using sophisticated techniques to discern what is true about the earth. The use of analogues and in gaining understanding and how Jesus is the ultimate analogue.

2. Did this sermon make you think about God/Christianity in a different way? If so, how?

Female – age 46 – most Sundays

The magnitude of His planning all of creation. I never really thought about the billions of years before Adam and Eve, yet geophysics shows that the earth was around for that long...

Female – age 15 – most Sundays

Yes. It made me think that God always has been and always will be.

Female – age 28 – about once a month

Yes, as do all the sermons. Makes you really see God in everything.

Male – age 61 – most Sundays

I don't think so but it reinforced the concept of God working within the material world.

Female – age 53 – most Sundays

No it more re-confirmed what I already understand.

Female – age 47 – most Sundays

I won't be able to look at a rock, fossil, mountain or hillside without thinking about what they say about God - his eternity, his renewing things and his movement in and around and behind and before all things.

Male – age 56 – several times per year

Not so much different as that it challenged me again to think of God as eternal and above time.

3. Any additional comments?

Female – age 28 – about once a month

Great presentation and sermon!

Female – age 53 – most Sundays

Modern day Australia is what southern AB looked like a very long time ago. We had crocodiles, reefs etc.

Male – age 56 – several times per year

Two other thoughts came to mind during the sermon: 1) Geophysics is all about reflections. I was wondering whether there is an analogy there, in us reflecting Jesus love (the ultimate analogue) and the world trying to interpret those reflections and geophysicists interpreting reflections of the rock record. I am not sure, just wondering. 2) In a similar vein, the idea that we see through a glass darkly, i.e. God's revelation, as the bible says, and the geophysicist also sees indirectly, or through a glass or mirror. Again, just a thought.