

Christianity & science in harmony?

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Abstract

A worldview that does not involve religion or science seems to be incomplete. However, a worldview that includes both religion and science may arouse concern of incompatibility. This paper looks at the particular religion, Christianity, and proceeds to develop a worldview in which Christianity and science are compatible with each other. The worldview may make use of some ideas of Christianity and may involve some author's own ideas on Christianity. It is thought that Christianity and science are in harmony in the sense that science can support beliefs in Christianity and in turn beliefs in Christianity can support science. To avoid future unnecessary conflicts between science and religion, it is suggested that a core faith Christianity worldview should be taken. However, this does not mean that certain parts of Scripture are abandoned. **Keywords:** Science; Bayesian Probability; Hypothesis Testing; Christianity; Holy Trinity.[†]

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1. Introduction

The intellectual fragmentation, and global socio-economic and ecological problems creating allegedly a state of crisis (Broekaert, 1998) are causing a demand for an integrative worldview (Lofgren, 2004). Some (e.g., Gabora, 1998) may consider that this fragmentation is due to the inconsistencies in some of the worldviews and the increasing specialization of knowledge. Apostel and his co-workers (Apostel and Van Landschoot, 1988; Apostel and Van der Veken, 1991) have been a driving force in worldview research. However, the worldview of Apostel only acknowledges the atheist spirituality element according to Broekaert (1998), so this seems to exclude God from his worldview. In this article, we try to put back God into the worldview, specifically the Christian Deity into our worldview.

Putting Christian Deity into our worldview is no easy task because it may create an uneasiness (Waldrop, 2011) or conflict (White, 1896; Provine, 1988; Coyne, 2015; Ungureanu, 2021) with other kinds of worldviews based on science (e.g., Carvalho, 2006). An integrative worldview cannot dispense with science because science is so pervasive in our daily life. While many states include science as part of their education programme, many states have a separation between state and religion so that their education programme may not include religion as part of their curriculum. This means that a worldview that integrates both science and religion is on a disadvantaged footing. There are also several proponents of an integrative approach (e.g., Pearcey and Thaxton, 1994; Moreland and Craig, 2003; Grandpierre, 2003; Russell, 2008; Barbour, 2013) to worldviews that include both religion and science. While personally the author believes that state and religion should be separated, a worldview that integrates science and religion needs to be articulated intellectually for many to have a more integrative or comprehensive worldview.

The relationship (De Cruz, 2017; Chan, 2018; Sixbert and Mutabazi, 2021) between science and religion may be more complex (e.g., Loncar, 2021) than the love-hate relationship between science and philosophy (De Haro, 2020). First, there are many different religions in the world. Second, there are the different types of relationships (e.g., Bube, 1995; Tenneson et al., 2015; Wikipedia, 2020) between science and religion. The first type of relationship between science and religion is uneasiness (Luke, 2017), or sometimes conflict (Horgan, 2015; Coyne, 2015) and if not outright war between the two (Coyne, 2018). An integrative worldview in this case would have to sort out the contradictions between the two worldviews so that they become compatible with each other. Another type of relationship between science and religion is that science and religion are operating at different realms, so that they are more or less independent (e.g., Gould, 1999) of each other. However, if they are independent of each other, then it is difficult to have an integrative worldview that combines the two. A third type of relationship between science and religion is that they are compatible (Scott, 1995) with each other. This type of relationship is congenial to the development of an integrative worldview. However, if we believe in

the worldview of science, we may also need to believe in the religion with such a scientific worldview. So, it is not a matter of simply claiming faith in the religion when we integrate the worldviews of science and religion together. The fourth type of relationship between science and religion is dialogue. The modern dialogue is thought to be originated from Barbour's (1966) book on issues in science and religion. Thereafter, there has been the development of academic journals like *Theology and Science* as well as *Zygon* to facilitate a dialogue between science and religion. The fifth type of relationship between science and religion is one of integration (Tenneson et al., 2014). While it is very rare to find a comprehensive integration of the two worldviews, over the ages some religion like Christianity has integrated some of the scientific ideas in their religion. This article looks at the possibility of this kind of integration in a fuller extent than previously done although some considers integration to be doomed to failure (Coyne, 2009). Specifically, this article looks at how to help us to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God using some scientifically accepted methodology.

As there are many religions in the world, why do we focus on Christianity? Why do we not try to integrate for example Eastern mysticism with science like the suggestion by Wang (2020)? Admittedly, this is a personal preference as the author is a believer of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This is based on personal conviction as well as a scientifically accepted methodology to decide whether to believe in Christianity. However, instead of believing in the Bible entirely and literally, a core faith perspective is taken for believing in certain parts of the Bible for Christianity. Having said that, it does not mean that we do not believe in what the Bible wrote perhaps metaphorically. Instead of believing the Bible as a whole, our integrative worldview is more committed to believe in the New Testament as a guidance on our faith. Nevertheless, the formulation of the core faith of Christianity is based on parts in both the Old Testament and New Testament to construct an integrative view of Christianity as the Old and New Testaments are related.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Sect. 2 presents the core faith perspective of Christianity, spelling out the core faith of our belief in this religious worldview. In Sect. 3, we used a scientifically accepted method to decide whether we will believe in the core faith Christianity. This is based on the degree of personal belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God based on the available, individual evidence. The combined degree of belief is then worked out as a recommendation to believe in or not in the core faith Christianity. Therefore, whether the reader believes our integrative worldview depends on his/her own subjective beliefs and the decision to take the recommendation by the scientifically accepted methodology or not. In Sect. 4, we present how science may come into terms with the core faith Christianity so that the apparent conflicts are resolved. In Sect. 5, we look at how Christianity helps the science worldview. Sect. 6 draws the concluding remarks.

2. Core faith perspective of Christianity

Suppose we are scientists and we want to believe in Christianity. Do we have to believe in everything written in the Bible literally? This is because some of the writings in the Old Testament is like mythology (e.g., Genesis 6) so that it is hard for a scientist to believe literally although we may believe it metaphorically. If we do not need to believe everything what the Bible says literally, then what things do we believe in Christianity. Furthermore, for a scientist, making fewer claims would be better as claims may be shown not to hold in the future, so there is a preference to commit less to the writing to avoid the commitment being shown to be false later. In the case that the commitment is shown to be false, scientists usually revise their theories in the light of new evidence as in scientific revolutions (Kuhn, 1996). Therefore, a scientist may adopt a core faith perspective of Christianity rather than believing in everything that is written in the Bible, so that we do not have to come into conflict with some of the scientific theories (like evolution theory) even though they may be provisional. Therefore, our approach is to state the central belief in Christianity and work out what the belief entails us to believe and decide whether a scientist can believe such things without being incompatible with science. Thus, we have to go through the details of these beliefs instead of relying on the standard summaries of Christian tenets like the Apostle's creeds or the Nicene creeds.

In a nutshell, Christianity is about believing Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is the Messiah who died for us on the cross for our sin redemption (and was buried), and who was resurrected three days later to overcome death so that we may be rewarded with (joyful) eternal life. In this belief, we have to tackle several beliefs that may contradict or may be incompatible with beliefs in science:

- (a) The existence of God
- (b) What is the Son of God?
- (c) Whether Jesus Christ is the Son of God or Messiah?
- (d) Can Jesus Christ be resurrected from the dead?
- (e) Has Jesus Christ sinned?

One particular view of science is that there is nothing apart from the natural order of things that we observe. This particular view may deny the existence of spiritual beings and the existence of God. This view is based on the belief that we discovered the natural laws of the universe and everything must follow from these laws so there are no exceptions.

Another view acknowledges that there is a natural order of things but does not deny that there are supernatural beings who may from time to time intervene in our universe. This view considers that while there are natural laws of the universe, supernatural beings can act by breaking these laws. According to this view, while most of the time when supernatural beings do not intervene our way of life, the natural laws are not broken, so our universe operates as according to our understanding. However, when supernatural beings intervene, the natural laws may be broken and

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some supernatural phenomenon may be experienced. Therefore, this view does not deny the existence of God, but on the other hand does not necessarily affirm the existence of God. It just indicates that the existence of God is not incompatible with science.

If the existence of God is not incompatible with science, why should scientist believe that there is God without requiring to believe in the Old Testament literally? For a core faith perspective, since Jesus Christ believed in the existence of God as He prayed to the Father, we would believe in what Jesus Christ believed and therefore the existence of God. If there is no God, then Jesus Christ's claim that He is the Son of God would be non-sensical. If there is no God, then the prayers by Jesus Christ would be in vain. If there is no God, then we cannot believe that Jesus Christ would be resurrected. Therefore, even if we hold a core faith perspective of Christianity, we will believe in the existence of God. In fact, it is not any God but the God that Jesus Christ refers to. That would mean it is the God that the Bible refers to as Jesus Christ is a Jew.

Previously, we have glossed over a point that Jesus Christ prayed to the Father but not to God, so what is God? Some may think that this is a mystery but Christianity does reveal something about God. God refers to the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in unity. However, how can all three qualified as God and accept people's worship without being accused of idolatry. One can think of the Father and Holy Spirit as made of the same substance so that there is no problem of being worshipped. For Jesus Christ, He is a man. According to Scripture, a man has a body, a soul and his spirit (Reichenbach, 2021). It is believed that the spirit of Jesus Christ is like the Holy Spirit or made of substance similar to the Father. Therefore, worshipping Jesus Christ is allowed in Christianity, and similarly for the virgin Mary or other saints whose spirit may be the Holy Spirit (Note that we are not encouraging Christians to worship saints since we do not know for sure the spirit of which saint is the Holy Spirit). In fact, this so-called substance (or spirit) may be some supernatural organic thing which can think separately or together. So, what the Father knows may imply Jesus Christ knows and the Holy Spirit knows as well. However, during the time that Jesus Christ lowers Himself to be a human walking on earth, He may not know what the Father thinks because He needs to be bounded by the predicament of human existence, even though Jesus Christ has supernatural power because of His spirit being made of the same substance as the Father. Therefore, the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are united as one spiritually. How do we know that Jesus Christ has God's spirit or the Holy spirit? Apart from the miracles that He made, when John baptised Jesus Christ, we were told in the Gospel that the Holy Spirit descended to Jesus Christ as a dove. Moreover, just before the last breath of Jesus Christ during crucifixion, Luke Gospel indicated that He commended his spirit to the Father (as probably His last words). Note that in Matthew for example, Jesus Christ cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (for fulfilling the prophesy probably to help Jews or others to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah) but that was not the last words of

Jesus Christ as Matthew indicated that Jesus Christ cried out further but did not record what He said. So, we suspect that Luke recorded the last words of Jesus Christ before he died. So, how did the Gospel come to know about this. This may be due to the fact that after Jesus Christ was resurrected, He was with the disciples for forty days and we suspect that He told the disciples about the significance of His last words before death during that time. In summary, we agree that God is the Holy Trinity except that the Father is a supernatural being rather than a person. While we may refer the Trinity to the Nicene creed, it is not easy to grasp this understanding of the Holy Trinity there.

Since Jesus Christ is part of the Holy Trinity, the name of the role of Jesus Christ is given to be the Son of God or God: the Son. Jesus Christ is described as the Son of God because He inherits God's capability just like the son inherits the wealth of his father. The name, Son of God, is preached to the Gentiles because it is easier for the Gentiles to know who Jesus Christ is instead of the Messiah, which most likely only the Jews understand at the time. Therefore, Jesus Christ made use of this name to the Gentiles so that He is associated with God and inherits the power of God. Did Jesus Christ claim to be the Son of God? In John's Gospel, Jesus Christ referred to Himself as the Son of God. In Luke's Gospel (Chapter 4), a daemon claimed Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Peter, His disciple, identified Him as the Son of God. Finally, after the resurrection, His disciplines refer Him as the Son of God. Therefore, there is no doubt that in Christianity, Jesus Christ claims to be the Son of God. In addition, the Gospel wrote that when Jesus Christ was baptised by John the Baptist, a voice came from heaven saying that He is my Son where He is Jesus Christ. In the transfiguration which was also mentioned in the epistle of Peter apart from the three Gospels, a voice came from a cloud saying that He is my beloved Son whom I have chosen. These voices are believed to be the voice of God or the Father, so that the passages suggest that God identifies Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Jesus Christ often referred himself to be the son of man instead of the Messiah or the Son of God during his days on earth. One reason is that the term son of man does not arouse any trouble that Jesus Christ foresaw with the authority at the time (like the Pharisee). In Luke's Gospel, he was indicated as the Messiah by Simone. Also, in John's Gospel, Jesus Christ told the Samaritan woman that He is the Messiah. Therefore, Jesus Christ did claim himself to be the Messiah but not in front of the Jews to avoid any troubles thereafter.

Can Jesus Christ be resurrected from the dead (e.g., Wright, 2003; Hutchinson, 2016; Canfeld, 2016)? According to the four Gospels, Jesus Christ was alive after he was dead three days. However, the four Gospels have different accounts about the discovery that Jesus Christ was alive after the resurrection. Some of these accounts may appear as contradictory. For example, Mary Magdalene appeared at the tomb with other women, and there is another account that she appeared by herself. However, these accounts can be made less contradictory if we consider her to arrive at the tomb twice: once with the women, and afterwards she arrived by herself after Peter and the other disciple. Therefore, the four accounts can be reconciled in some

way to make the resurrection believable. However, why do we not doubt these accounts? The authors of the Bible appear to be writing down as the events occur. For example, all the Gospels identified that the women found that Jesus Christ is not in the tomb first. If the author wants his/her account to be believed by others, by twisting the facts of the events, then the author can claim that some man has discovered first that the tomb was empty because women in a Jewish society cannot testify in courts at the time. Note that one should not rely on the Gospels being too consistent as this may raise suspicion of collusion (Strobel, 1998). Moreover, the New Testament sometimes shows some embarrassing moments of the well-known disciple, Peter, who claimed to disown Jesus Christ three times before the rooster crows. If the New Testament is a fiction, such moments may not be recorded in the Gospel. Finally, if the New Testament tries to make people believe by twisting the facts, then the New Testament need not show that the disciples do not understand what Jesus Christ was talking about during His preaching. Instead, the New Testament should include fake responses of the disciples that they understood Jesus Christ preaching, so that the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is reinforced. However, the New Testament did not make this kind of twists to make people believe. Therefore, we believe that the New Testament can be believed to be telling the truth.

For our sin redemption, Jesus Christ needs to be sinless because if he has sinned, his death is only for his own sin and he cannot redeem our sin. According to the Old Testament, our original sin condition is passed down from Adam and Eve through birth. That is why Jesus Christ was not conceived in a conventional way. Instead, it is through the work of the Holy Spirit that the Jesus Christ body was conceived in the virgin Mary so that Jesus Christ does not have the original sin condition like us. Without this original sin condition, Jesus Christ may be able to communicate with God or the Father directly throughout His life as He does not need to be separated from God like us. Jesus Christ is also unlikely to have sinned since in John's Gospel, Jesus Christ was performing baptism for other people and He had started his ministry before his baptism by John the Baptist. Jesus Christ also performed miracle before the baptism, like changing water to wine according to John's Gospel. Therefore, we believe that Jesus Christ has not sinned.

What is sin in Christianity? Sin is about transgressing the rule of God. For example, the ten commandments were given to the Jews when they have a covenant with God. For Adam and Eve before the fall, the instruction not to eat the fruit of the knowledge tree is a rule or command from God. The punishment of sin for human is death. That is why Jesus Christ has to die for us because it is the punishment of our sins (not His) by God.

3. How can science help in deciding to believe in the core faith Christianity?

One way that science can help us to believe in Christianity is that science employs statistical methods to make (risky) decisions. Similarly, we can use statistical methods to help us to decide whether to believe in Christianity. Typically, it requires us to estimate the p -value and decide whether to reject or accept the null hypothesis.

The basic idea is to collect evidence. For each class of evidence E , there is a likelihood that we believe B to be true, so that this belief can be expressed as a subjective probability, $p(B | E)$. Since there are more than one class of evidence from more than one source, we have a set of probabilities $\{p(B|E_i)\}_{\text{for all } i}$. Suppose that we have five classes of evidence (since we will discuss five sources of evidence later). We want to calculate the joint probability, $p(B|E1, B|E2, B|E3, B|E4, B|E5)$. Next, we assume that $B|E1, B|E2$, etc. are independent so that

$$p(J) = p(B|E1, B|E2, B|E3, B|E4, B|E5) = p(B|E1)p(B|E2)p(B|E3)p(B|E4)p(B|E5).$$

In this way, the joint probability, say $p(J) = p(B|E1, B|E2, B|E3, B|E4, B|E5)$, can be calculated based on the conditional probabilities given the individual evidence. Now, the joint probability can be considered as if though it is the p -value for the null hypothesis. The convention is that if the p -value is less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis is rejected. Similarly, if $p(J) < 0.05$, then we reject our belief that B is true.

In our case, what is B ? B is the fact that Jesus Christ is NOT the Son of God. Why do we need the disbelief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? That is because we assumed that the joint events in the joint probability are independent so that the conditional probabilities can be multiplied together. If we assumed that B is the probability that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, then we cannot assume that the joint events are independent as the individual classes of evidence for Jesus Christ is the Son of God are linked up to the source that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Suppose that given the class of evidence E , the probability that you believe that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God is 0.5. This special probability of 0.5 is effectively saying that you don't know whether you believe or disbelieve that Jesus Christ is the Son of God since your degrees of belief and disbelief are the same. Suppose for all five classes of evidence, you don't know whether Jesus Christ is not the Son of God given each class of evidence. Then, the joint probability $p(J)$ is $0.5^5 = 0.03125$ which is less than 0.05. So, we would reject the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, and instead accept the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Note that this is like deciding experimentally whether cold fusion does not exist in a demonstration as advocated by Luk (2019), but this is now applied in historical science instead of experimental science.

It might be argued that if we have enough pieces of evidence (say n), then even if we do not know whether to belief or not (i.e., $p(B|E_i) = 0.5$), the joint probability (i.e., $p(J) = 0.5^n$) will end up being arbitrary small for n to be arbitrary large. However, this will not happen. This is because the so-called pieces of evidence are actually pools or

categories or classes of evidence instead of individual facts. For example, E_i could be the miracles not mentioned in the Bible so that this refers to a group or class of miracles rather than an individual miracle. Therefore, this group or class of miracles is treated as just one piece of evidence so that there are not many pools or categories or classes of evidence. In addition, we are looking for evidence to support that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and there are not many pools or categories or classes of evidence that would support such a claim. So, there will not be a lot of evidence to multiply in the joint probability. Therefore, n cannot be arbitrary large because of the interpretation of the probability $p(B|E_i)$.

In the following subsections, we will discuss the various evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, so you can formulate your degree of belief as a probability, $p(\text{not } B | E)$. To obtain the probability of $p(B|E)$, one just computes one minus $p(\text{not } B | E)$, i.e., $p(B|E) = 1 - p(\text{not } B | E)$. We can then use the probabilities, $\{p(B | E)\}$, to compute the joint probability, $p(J)$, and decide whether this p -value is less than 0.05. If it is, then we can reject the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God and accept the alternative that Jesus Christ is the Son of God instead. In this way, we can use probability to help us to decide by using our degree of belief of the individual evidence.

One problem with the previous formulation of the joint probability is the assumption that $p(B|E1)$ is independent of $p(B|E2)$, etc. The problem is that we assume that the probabilities are independent but these probabilities are related to the same event B . Therefore, one wonders whether we can make such an independent assumption. An alternative way to help us to make the decision is to calculate $p(B | E1, E2, E3, E4, E5)$ using Bayes' rule as follows:

$$p(B|E1, E2, E3, E4, E5) = \frac{p(E1, E2, E3, E4, E5|B)p(B)}{p(E1, E2, E3, E4, E5)}.$$

We assume that $E1, E2, E3$, etc. are conditionally independent given B so that we have:

$$p(B|E1, E2, E3, E4, E5) = \frac{p(E1|B)p(E2|B)p(E3|B)p(E4|B)p(E5|B)p(B)}{p(E1, E2, E3, E4, E5)}.$$

The conditional independence assumption is reasonable since B is about Jesus Christ is not the Son of God and the classes of evidence, $E1$ to $E5$, are supporting that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Next, we assume that the different classes of evidence are coming from independent sources since we assume that B is true. So, we have:

$$p(B|E1, E2, E3, E4, E5) = \frac{p(E1|B)p(E2|B)p(E3|B)p(E4|B)p(E5|B)p(B)}{p(E1)p(E2)p(E3)p(E4)p(E5)}.$$

Using the definition of conditional probability, the above is rewritten as:

$$p(B|E1, E2, E3, E4, E5) = \frac{p(B|E1)p(B|E2)p(B|E3)p(B|E4)p(B|E5)}{p(B)p(B)p(B)p(B)p(B)}.$$

Now, if we assume that we do not know whether Jesus Christ is not the Son of God for each individual class of evidence (i.e., $p(B | E) = 0.5$) and we assume that the combined probability, $p(B | E1, E2, E3, E4, E5) = 0.05$, then we can work out $p(B)$ by solving the following:

$$0.05 = \frac{0.03125}{p(B)p(B)p(B)p(B)p(B)}.$$

Therefore, $p(B) = 0.889$. What this suggest is that if $p(B) \geq 0.889$, then $p(B|E1, E2, E3, E4, E5) \leq 0.05$. In this case, we will reject the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, so we would accept that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (even we do not know whether Jesus Christ is the Son of God given the individual class of evidence). Now, $p(B)$ is the prior probability that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. If you ask someone who has not heard of Jesus Christ and ask him/her to assign a prior probability that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, then we expect that the probability (i.e., $p(B)$) to be close to one or we expect that it would be much larger than 0.889. Thus, if we hold that we do not know from the following individual classes of evidence that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, then overall we should believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God given the five classes of independent evidence that we provide. In the rest of the section, we will examine each class of evidence to come up with my belief that I do not know whether that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God or I lean to believe that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God.

3.1 E1: Circumstantial evidence from biblical event

Shroud of Turin is a piece of linen shroud that is thought to have wrapped Jesus Christ after the crucifixion. It bears the negative image of a man who was flagellated and crucified. Previous historical and scientific evidence points to it being a medieval creation. In 1390, it was attested that the local bishop wrote that the shroud was a forgery and that the unnamed artist has confessed. Previous radiocarbon dating done in 1980s suggested that the sample of fabric taken at a corner of the shroud is consistent with the medieval date. However, the proponents of the shroud for Jesus Christ suggested that the radiocarbon dating is unreliable as it was taken from a corner of the shroud that was repaired in medieval period leading to the medieval dating result. Later dating in 2013 by Fanti based on various threads believed to be taken from the shroud points to dates from 300BC and 400AD which includes the period that Jesus Christ had lived. There are other pieces of evidence to suggest that the Shroud of Turin is much older than the earlier radiocarbon dating. For example, Rogers argued that the absence of vanillin in the threads of the shroud suggested that the shroud is quite old, somewhere between 1,300 years ago and 3,000 years ago. Therefore, the shroud is unlikely to be just 840 years old. In 2019, researchers obtained access to the raw data of the previous radiocarbon dating of the shroud of Turin, and they found that the data was heterogeneous, invalidating the results. The researchers called for a more careful radiocarbon dating of the shroud. While the exact date of the shroud is still a mystery, I personally believe, though not strongly, that the

shroud of Turin is of the Jesus Christ era as I believe that the sample was taken from a corner that was tampered with during the medieval period.

Given that the period is in the era of Jesus Christ, how do we know that the negative image is Jesus Christ? Apart from the shroud of Turin, there is a relic of Jesus Christ called the Sudarium of Oviedo which is a small piece of cloth that wrapped around the head of Jesus Christ after his death. Now, the blood type found in the Sudarium of Oviedo is AB which is the same blood type found in the shroud of Turin. In addition, researchers have mapped the geometric points of the face of Jesus Christ on the Sudarium of Oviedo to those of the face of the man's image on the shroud of Turin, and they found that these geometric points correspond to each other. So, there are some pieces of evidence to suggest that the image of the man on the shroud of Turin is Jesus Christ.

The significance of the shroud of Turin is not that it is just a relic of Jesus Christ. It is based on the fact that there was a resurrection miracle. The miracle involved ultraviolet light radiating from Jesus Christ body onto the shroud of Turin that is mysteriously laying flat at the bottom and at the top of Jesus Christ body. The power of the ultraviolet light to make the negative image on the shroud of Turin is enormous, something that can still not be achieved with current technology. The mystery suggested that the body of Jesus Christ is hanging in mid-air so that the shroud of Turin can be placed flat at the bottom and on top of the body of Jesus Christ to register the image. If the image was formed based on shining ultraviolet light from a body wrapped with the shroud, then we should see creases and distortions to the image that are absent from the shroud of Turin. Therefore, some suggested that the body of Jesus Christ was literally raised up as in the Scripture. While it is not easy to swallow this theory as there may be more twists to it (e.g., some suggested that the image was formed by bas relief but the histogram of the grey level registers of the image suggest that it was not), I have the tendency to believe that the shroud of Turin has registered the resurrection miracle even though I am not one hundred percent certain. Let us say that my subjective probability $p(B | E1)$ is 0.4 where B is the belief that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God.

3.2 E2: Circumstantial evidence from miracles in non-biblical event

There are quite a number of miracles that happened after the Bible was written and so they are not mentioned in the Bible. The first one is the Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano. The miracle alleged to have occurred in the eighth century at Lanciano, Italy. According to the tradition, a monk had doubts about the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. When he said the words of consecration, the bread and wine turned into flesh and blood. The miracle was claimed to be authentic by the Catholic Church. Recent investigations by researchers show that the flesh is some type of cardiac tissue of blood type AB. This corroborates with the blood type found in the Sudarium of Oviedo and the Shroud of Turin. There are other recent Eucharistic miracles in Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela and Poland. For the Argentina case which

has been documented independently, the tested blood type was AB and the tissue found was some type of cardiac tissue. They appear to corroborate with the findings at Lanciano.

Other miracles are done by saints of the Catholic church or East Orthodox church. Such saints are obviously related to the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because they may be the sister, bishop or Pope of the East Orthodox/Catholic church preaching the Gospel as well as the mother of Jesus Christ. There are abundant examples of miracles of saints (e.g., Marian apparitions [e.g., Pandarakalam, 2013; 2019; Horsfall, 2000; Dalleur 2021] or incorruptible corpses of saints). While I personally do not believe that every miracle is genuine, only some of these miracles are true would suggest that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is worth believing in. Therefore, my degree of belief of miracles leans towards believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God although it is not far from being don't know. Let us say that my subjective probability $p(B | E2)$ is 0.45.

3.3 E3: Testimony from the Bible

In the New Testament, many of the disciples provide testimony of Jesus Christ who has performed many miracles (for example raising people from the dead, giving sight to blind people, etc). These miracles are described in the Gospels of Mark, Luke, Matthew and John. These miracles attested that Jesus Christ has supernatural power so that it is not difficult to believe that he is the Son of God.

As Jesus Christ is concerned that he is the Messiah, he did many things according to the Scripture. The Gospels also try to point out that Jesus Christ fulfilled many prophecies that the Old Testament has made, so that it qualifies Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Because these prophecies were made before Jesus Christ, it was not clear whether the prophecies were accurately written down in the Old Testament so that it was not clear that debates over whether the prophecies were fulfilled were meaningful. Even though if not all prophecies were as predicted, some would make us lean toward believing that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

After the resurrection, the disciples held firm belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God as in Acts, Romans, etc. of the New Testament. This is in sharp contrast to the disciples before the death of Jesus Christ. It is not clear whether during the days after Jesus Christ was resurrected, Jesus Christ spent time explaining to the disciples about God's message so they become convinced. It is also not clear whether the disciples felt more confident after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, because the Holy spirit dwelled in the disciples and gave them supernatural power, strengthening their faith. Also, it is not known whether the firm belief of the disciples is strengthened by Paul who was a Pharisee knowing all the details of the Old Testament. It might be a combination of these factors that have encouraged the disciples to be bolder in their faith. They are also not restrained any more to tell God's message after the resurrection because before Jesus Christ death, Jesus Christ explicitly forbade the disciples to call Him the Messiah or Son of God. In Acts and Romans, as Paul went to

preach the Gentiles in Rome, it would make more sense to call Jesus Christ as the Son of God instead of the Messiah which is only meaningful in the Jewish community. Therefore, we see that Son of God is being mentioned more in the Acts, Romans, etc. than in the Gospels. These disciples stand as our witness of the Gospel and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Such firm beliefs are rare unless they have very strong conviction. In fact, for some Apostles, like St Peter and St Paul, they have to die for their beliefs.

Paul's conversion is an extraordinary example of witness to God's message. Paul was blinded by Jesus Christ when Paul was on the way to Damascus to persecute the Christians. At Damascus, Paul blindness was healed by a Christian, and Paul was converted from a persecuting Pharisee to a Christian. Such sudden change in beliefs is rare unless there is again strong conviction. This shows that Jesus Christ, after the resurrection, has supernatural power which fits the description that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Surprisingly, I found the New Testament to be more believable than the miracles by the saints. So, my subjective probability, $p(B | E3)$ is 0.3.

3.4 E4: Personal testimony

Our own testimony may be another independent source of testimonial evidence. This may be through studying the Bible to get insights into God's messages to us. This may be interaction between us and God via prayers. While not all prayers are answered positively, some are and we need to find out why those prayers are answered positively or negatively in order to get the message God sent to us. Therefore, this is an example of studying Bible and praying to add to our own testimonial evidence to strengthen our faith.

For example, I have prayed to obtain the first prize of the lottery. Obviously, God would not grant me such wishes even if I say I will give a portion to charity. However, when I pray for my child to get into university, it was answered positively. Now, getting into university is not a zero-sum game because the university set the conditional offer to the applicant to meet. If the applicant meets the condition, then the university will accept the application. This is unlike a situation where God grants one and has to let down another because the situation is a zero-sum game. I also prayed that my paper gets accepted in a top journal which is critical to the rest of my employment at the university. I feel so relieved after I learnt that my prayer is answered positively. As many of my prayers about important events are answered positively, I have developed my faith through this personal testimony. Apart from prayers, I recently have a personal religious experience in which I suspect to hear the voice from God simultaneously with bright light appearing in my vision when I closed my eyes while laying on my bed. This voice is rather forceful which appears to be louder than or in the foreground of the other voices I hear. Also, I am unable to change the content of what the voice is saying to make sure it is not due to my own

thoughts. Therefore, I lean toward personally believing in that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So, my subjective probability, $p(B | E4)$, is say 0.4.

3.5 E5: Other peoples' testimony

The final source of evidence is the testimony of religious experience of other people. Where do we get this kind of evidence? One source is from friends who was converted to be a Christian. In my experience, one of my friends has a religious experience. He was performing philosophical analysis of the Bible passages when suddenly he heard a voice saying that "That is enough, Joe". My friend was scared. Afterwards, he was converted to become a Christian.

Another source to obtain testimonial evidence is from reports in churches about religious experience of other people. For example, I went to one church which shared the religious experience of a sick man whose kidney is not functioning well. He asked God why he had to suffer from such sickness, and he felt God or Jesus Christ hugged him without saying a word. This hug includes a warm stream of current flowing through his body so that he cannot be mistaken that someone hugged him. Afterwards, he was converted to Christianity. This is a good example to explain why we need to go to Church to hear these examples to strengthen our faith. Since I do not have many such pieces of evidence, my subjective probability, $p(B | E5)$, is only 0.6. This probability can be decreased further if we include outside evidence about Jesus that corroborate with the New Testament. For example, Strobel pointed out that "one expert documented thirty-nine ancient sources that corroborate more than one hundred facts concerning Jesus' life, teaching, crucifixion and resurrection" (Strobel, 1998). This probability reduction is not done here to give more credits to our combined probability later.

3.6 Summary

For each class of evidence, there is no clear case that I belief absolutely that Jesus Christ is the Son of God nor that He is not the Son of God. However, if we use the statistical method that we propose earlier in this section, then the joint probability is $0.4 \times 0.45 \times 0.3 \times 0.4 \times 0.6 = 0.01296$. If we further assume that $p(B)$ is 0.9 (i.e., we assume that 9 in 10 people who do not know who Jesus Christ is, but who would believe that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God), then $p(B | E1, E2, E3, E4, E5) = 0.01296 / 0.9^4 = 0.0198 < 0.05$. Therefore, I would reject the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God at 95% confidence level and accept that He is the Son of God. This happens to be my decision to believe in Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If you input all the probabilities of the individual evidence to be more than 0.5, then you may come up with a different conclusion. Therefore, you have to perform research including looking up details of Marian apparitions (e.g., Wikipedia, 2021), Eucharistic miracles (e.g., Tesoriero, 2021), Shroud of Turin (e.g., STERA Inc, 2021), etc. in the five classes of evidence to come up with your own subjective probabilities of the individual classes of evidence in order to come up with a more accurate estimate of

$p(B \mid E1, E2, E3, E4, E5)$ or p -value. Note that for $E4$ and $E5$, you need to start practicing your faith and go to church to gauge your conviction properly. If you do not practice your faith or go to church, perhaps you can set your $p(B|E4) = p(B|E5) = 0.5$ (i.e., you do not know).

4. How to reconcile science with core faith Christianity?

Some scientists adopt the (philosophical) naturalism worldview or (intrinsic) methodological naturalism (Boudry et al., 2010), and they hold that the physical laws are not allowed to be broken because nature has such regularities. Such scientists have strong faith or trust in the physical laws which apply all the time and perhaps everywhere. This is only an assumption in (Luk, 2017) for scientific study and it is not a principle. If we regard experiments as sampling reality in some spacetime where the reality may be thought of as some continuum (let us take that for the time being), then in between the spacetime sampling points, we only believe that the physical laws apply. We do not know whether any supernatural beings break the physical laws in between the sampling points of the reality spacetime continuum. If the supernatural beings break the continuum without us noticing it, then supernatural beings can co-exist with the physical laws only that physical laws apply most of the time and there are exceptions with supernatural beings. Thus, even if we establish some physical laws, it does not mean that it must work all the time although we would like to believe that is the case as scientists. If we want to make sure that it works all the time, then we have to do the experiment to show that the physical laws are obeyed all the time, and we do not have the resources to do that. Therefore, even if we believe that the physical laws are true, it does not mean that there are no supernatural beings or miracles.

Another conflicting issue is about the Christian creationist view of the universe which stems from the Old Testament against the scientific facts that we have about the universe. Specifically, some Christian creationists think that the earth is only thousands of years old according to the Bible instead of millions or billions of years old according to geology in science. The age of the earth is based on one interpretation of the Bible by some Christian creationist, and there are other interpretations of the Old Testament which may not give the similar age of the earth as the creationists. Specifically, we offer one interpretation of the Old Testament that may not conflict with any views of the age of the earth or this universe. In particular, the universe that the Old Testament refers to is not the same as the universe that we are living now. So, when God created the universe with Adam and Eve on the earth, that earth is not the same as the earth that we are in now. When Adam and Eve fall, they were taken from that universe to our present universe. So, the age of our universe now has no bearing on the age of that universe that God created with Adam and Eve before the fall.

Yet another conflicting issue is whether we evolve from ape according to evolutionary biology in science. In order not to discredit any scientific findings or hurt

Christian feelings, again we follow the path to explore that the Old Testament is open to interpretations. Using our previous interpretation as an example, when Adam and Eve were fallen from the other universe to this one, their genetic makeup could be similar to the ones that have evolved on this earth here by the time they fall into this earth. The human beings on here before Adam and Eve did not have the soul and spirit, so they are not fully human in God's perspective even though their DNAs are similar to Adam and Eve. When they breed possibly with the other human beings on this earth, God may assign the soul and spirit so that their offspring are fully human in God's perspective. In this bizarre interpretation, it suggests that even if science shows that we were evolved from ape according to DNA makeup, it does not mean that those humans are fully human in God's perspective because they lack the soul and spirit which science cannot show yet.

Our point is that the Old Testament is open to interpretation, and it is very easy to make a commitment that may turn out to be false. However, since we believe in Jesus Christ is the Son of God and not necessarily any specific interpretation of the Old Testament, it is better to keep quiet and let the scholars who know the details of the actual original writing (in Hebrew or Aramaic) to figure out what the interpretation should be. Even the scholars can be wrong, as the Old Testament like Genesis may have been only written metaphorically. Therefore, we should restrain ourselves into claiming that every part of the Bible can be interpreted literally. It may be safer to claim that most parts of the New Testament can be interpreted literally apart from certain parts in which Jesus Christ or others said things metaphorically. Therefore, we try to commit to a core faith Christianity so that we do not get into trouble with conflicting views with science and we can stay focused on the core faith that we have for maintaining our belief.

Coyne (2015) contrasted the ways for knowing or learning in which science is based on facts while religion or Christianity is based on faith. This turns out not to be true because in science the facts that we have are only sampled data. We still need faith in science to believe that the physical law applies in the future. Likewise, Christians who believed in Christianity may be due to their conviction. Their conviction may be evidence for them to believe in Christianity. Therefore, Christian believing in Christianity may be based on some kind of evidence rather than just faith. Thus, the dichotomy (Hughes, 2015) that religion is based on faith and science is based on facts may be too simplistic.

5. How does Christianity support science?

Christianity supports science in many ways, most notably where science is silent about. For example, science is silent on many moral issues, whereas Christianity provides some direction or prescription to those issues. By combining the worldviews of Christianity and science, the integrated worldview would be more comprehensive providing a perspective in a fuller spectrum of issues that any one view will bring.

Christianity & science in harmony?

In Christianity, God must have laid down the physical laws or order without much direct intervention so that humans have free will. Otherwise, if God intervenes continuously, we cannot be said to have free will. This explains why God is not present with us most of the time. However, God does intervene in human affairs as God sends Jesus Christ to be with us. God may intervene when we are not doing scientific experiments so that this would not affect the observations that we make. Since God may intervene, it makes sense to ask for God's help as we are supposed to take refuge in Him.

Since God does not intervene most of the time, we should rely on science if we can in order to handle our daily affairs. There is no harm to rely on science and take refuge in God, but God may not answer positively every time a request is made. This may include having painful experience in which God does not respond. However, this is a test of our faith of God, and God may lead us to a different situation later if we are patient enough. Therefore, our default is to rely on science, and (additionally) take refuge in God when necessary.

Apart from the personal level, Christianity as a religious organization has been a patron of science. It has provided many foundations of schools, universities and hospitals. Perhaps, most notable as a scientist and as a priest is Georges Lemaître who conceived the idea of the big bang theory (de Felipe, 2017) inspired by Genesis in the Old Testament. This is an example of a priest and a scientist who has made major contributions in science, and the idea was originated from Genesis in the Old Testament showing that Christianity helps the scientific progress at the time. Note that not all scientists (e.g., [Neves, 2020]) are comfortable that the cosmological model is based on singularities, and some may suggest that there is no singularity in the cosmological model about the beginning of the universe.

6. Conclusions

A sketch of a worldview that integrates both science and Christianity is presented. We demarcate the core faith Christianity that we hold. To establish this belief, we borrow methodology in statistics that are usually used in science to decide whether to accept or reject that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This involves assigning subjective probabilities of this belief based on the different classes of evidence available to come up with a combined degree of belief that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God. If the reader has the combined probability to be less than 0.05, then we reject the hypothesis that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God and accept that He is. This would enable the reader to have a solid basis in his/her belief in Christianity. Before the practice of faith or going to Church, the reader is advised to assign a subjective probability of 0.5 to evidence based on personal testimony and the evidence based on other people's testimony, as 0.5 represents the reader does not know whether to believe or not. Therefore, for the reader to believe in the core faith Christianity, (s)he needs to research into the other classes of evidence more thoroughly to obtain a strong belief in

$p(\text{not } B \mid E1)$, $p(\text{not } B \mid E2)$ and $p(\text{not } B \mid E3)$ so that these subjective probabilities are more than or equals to 0.5. We also cautioned to interpret the Old Testament too literally as we may over-commit causing unnecessary conflicts with science. Nevertheless, the big bang theory was a good example of a scientific theory inspired by Scripture, showing that Christianity and science can help each other. This may in turn support the kalam cosmological argument as popularized by William Lane Craig. Hopefully, we can believe in Christianity based on evidence, reasoning and faith similar to science. Having said that, the aim of this article is not about convincing the sceptics to believe in Christianity. Instead, it provides a scientific methodology by which those who are uncertain to believe in Jesus Christ to come up with a decision as there are uncertainties in believing each class of evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Also, it might be interesting to establish a “scientia” theology (Loncor, 2021) that is organized like that of science (Luk, 2010; 2017), in order to make our understanding of God more complete by combining evidence, reason and faith.

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