

15 August 2012

To: astronomers, astrobiologists, cosmologists, and other scientists  
From: Theodore Walker Jr., special guest editor, Journal of Cosmology  
Cc: Joseph Bracken, special guest editor, Journal of Cosmology; Rudy Schild, editor-in-chief, Journal of Cosmology

Subject: an invitation to comment on theology in cosmology, especially astro-theology in the Journal of Cosmology

Dear astronomers, astrobiologists, cosmologists, and other scientists,

Please consider accepting this invitation to offer a critical commentary (up to 1000 words) on the proper place [if any] of theology in cosmology, especially in the online peer-reviewed open access Journal of Cosmology at < <http://www.journalofcosmology.com/Contents.html> >.

Cosmology is about the WHOLE of reality, a whole sufficiently organized and finely tuned to permit our evolution. As such, cosmology is where fully panoramic astronomy, fully panoramic astrobiology (panspermia, panpsychism), and fully panoramic theology (panentheism) converge. A traditional name for astronomy-meets-theology is "Astro-theology" (William Derham, 1715).

The June 2012 volume 19 of the Journal of Cosmology includes a sustained focus on astro-theology. [Also, see Walker's "Anthropic Reasoning about Fine-Tuning" in section III of volume 16.] The forthcoming September 2012 volume 20 will include more astro-theology, plus your critical comments (pro and con) concerning whether or not scientific cosmology should include theology.

Response to theology should be distinguished from response to religion. Theology and religion do not always agree. Fundamentalist preachers have many unkind things to say about theologians. The historical reason for tenure in the modern university is to protect the theologians from the religious. More theologians than astronomers have been burned at the stake! Starting with volume one and continuing throughout, the Journal of Cosmology includes many responses to religion. Now we are being invited to respond to theology. Should scientific cosmology include theology? If not, why not? If so, how so? Any restrictions? What restrictions?

These issues emerged for me in this somewhat comical way: I am a theologian serving as a guest editor for the Journal of Cosmology, and I have been sending emails to theologians inviting them to contribute to volume 20. Strangely, the invitation sender (a theologian) has been urging theologians to avoid using the explicitly theological G-word (G\*d) in their submissions because modern scientific peer-reviewed journals such as the Journal of Cosmology reject appeals to deity as unscientific. The prevailing scientific attitude is this: If it's affirmative language about G\*d, then it must be unscientific, and therefore not appropriate to scientific literature. And of course, if the journal is about electrical currents, an appeal to Ohm's law is acceptable, and an appeal to divine influence is not. Fair enough. No problem.

However, when the scientific range of concern is fully panoramic (embracing the whole of reality and all parts of that whole), theology cannot be avoided. Given a neoclassical/panentheist conception of G\*d [that G\*d is the all-inclusive whole of reality (Schubert Ogden, Charles Hartshorne, Alfred North Whitehead)], any deliberation about cosmology as such must be at least implicitly theological. And excluding the G-word and other explicit theology merely favors implicit theology over explicit theology. Favoring implicit over explicit is thoroughly unscientific. Hence, any truly scientific journal of cosmology that is really about "cosmology" (instead of mere long-range astronomy) must do what the Journal of Cosmology is presently doing, admitting logos about theos (= admitting theology).

Even though affirmative use of the explicitly theological G-word is being restricted to no more than one such usage per essay, the Journal of Cosmology is, I think, doing something rightly revolutionary in admitting theological deliberations. And of course we theologians favor this revolutionary admission. That is to be expected. What is now being solicited is critical commentary--written by scientists--concerning the proper place [if any] of theology in scientific cosmology. You might consider your commentary (or article) to be a directive to the Journal of Cosmology (and to your scientific colleagues) concerning the proper scientific response to astro-theology in cosmology.

For inclusion in the September issue, please submit to <Editor@journalofcosmology.com> by 01 September 2012 (or at the latest, by 05 September 2012).

More righteousness.

Sincerely,

THEO

Theodore Walker Jr., PhD, special guest co-editor for volumes 19-20 of the Journal of Cosmology