



POLICY

Religious Issues

Dr. Jerry Galloway Astronomy Activities

Our practice of astronomy will do nothing to limit or inhibit participants' belief or faith in any religion of their choice. So, religion will play no part in the astronomy activities or mission of events and programs under Dr. Galloway's direction.

Detail:

Science and, in particular, Astronomy do not presume that no God exists. Science does not attempt to prove that no God exists. The mission of science and the mission of religion are not the same nor are they in conflict. Scientists, if they are true to their science, make no statements and draw no conclusions about religious ideas except that they are not provable - as scientists understand that notion.

Essentially, scientists are interested in proving facts. That is, they are interested in moving from the absence of things known to having more things known. By "knowing," science has particular protocols, particular methods and systems whereby ideas are accepted as truth. These rules are not the same as in religion. The domains of science and religion, in that sense, have nothing to do with each other.

In science, many things may be true, may be factual, but this makes no difference, because nothing is accepted as true, not a fact, not accepted until the idea passes the specific tests of the protocols accepted in the discipline of science. Essentially, all ideas fall into this realm. Religion is not or should not be particularly singled out any more than anything else. That is, all notions are excluded until proven through the procedures and methods of science.

To say that science has one theory of the origin of the earth and that religion has another is not the point. Those who hold and believe religious notions, base their belief on faith. They may even site evidence, anecdotes and testimonials that are believable by others. Such ideas may be accepted as true and absolute. I, too, have my beliefs and ideas that I have accepted in my faith. In any event, the notions of religion are not provable through the same systems that science employs. Even the concept of "proof" itself is different. In that sense and in at least that way, science and religion are separate.

There are the religions of Abraham (Christianity, Catholicism, many Protestant variations, Sunni Islam, Shiite Islam, Sufism Islam, Orthodox Judaism, Hasidic Judaism, Falasha Judaism, and more), religions of Dharm a (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and more), religions of law and order (Confucianism, Taoism), Spirit-based religions (Shinto, Oomoto), religions of life direction (Scientology and others), Tribal religions, Neopagan religions, and even religions built on the belief in alien life. To resolve how one religious view point has greater rights to be heard thus suppressing others is not and cannot be a part of our mission.

So that we do not risk offending anyone and to avoid dealing with conflicting issues later, this policy is intended to provide the complete and final explanation as to how religion or religious topics will not be a part of astronomy activities. There will be no articles published, no stories shared, no information disseminated, no activities provided or endorsed that support, endorse or otherwise encourage any particular religious perspective. In this way, your beliefs, your faith, your ideas of God and the world in which we live, will be protected from intrusion, betrayal or abuse.

We will engage in the science and practice of astronomy within the traditional methods, protocols and systems of science. Whether you see a star, a planet, the objects of the night's sky as God's handiwork or just the infinite expanse of evolving matter, makes no difference to us. Whether your faith is your science or whether your science is your faith, it makes no difference to us. It is our mission to observe, witness, examine and understand the beauty and awe of the physical universe above us and to share that hobby with others who are interested.

Dr. Jerry P. Galloway