

Scientific illiteracy and religion

Written by Rodger A Payne

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RODGER A PAYNE, JUL 10 2010

The May/June 2010 *Utne Reader* has a brief piece on science versus religion that reframes classic tensions in terms of climate change:

Everyone needs to remember, however, that “not all of the religious have a problem with science,” Chris Mooney, author of *Unscientific America: How Scientific Illiteracy Threatens Our Future*, tells **Free Inquiry** (Feb.-March 2010). An atheist (and one-time atheist activist), Mooney finds fault in pitting science against religion. While he advocates for defending science education, in order to do so “it is critical that we mobilize the pro-science moderates...”

In other words, Mooney wants athiests (and Gaia-ists?) to tone down their attacks on religion. Environmentalists worried about climate change need believers to embrace scientific literacy too:

“The new atheism, as a strategy, flies in the face of this, since it is often about attacking and alienating the religious moderates.” More than any other field, science plays a starring role in many of the most important policy debates and decisions of our time. “Broadly speaking, scientific illiteracy is the cause of 20 years of gridlock on the global-warming issue,” Mooney says. His recommended course of action: Give up the grudge match and allow scientific literacy to become a shared social priority.

By the way, I’m sorry for disappearing for so long. I originally agreed to blog through the Copenhagen meeting, but I later decided to post regularly through this year. I’ll aspire to do better.

About the author:

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