

Science, Christianity, and the Meaning of Success

6th May

Synopsis

Abstract

“Success” in any pursuit – from construction to demolition – can only be judged against the intended outcome. In this seminar, we consider a Christian perspective on the *intended outcomes* of a career in science. We then look at how the lessons learned from science can apply to other fields of endeavour.

Part 1: Dr. Mike Brownutt

Scientific enquiry is a multifaceted pursuit, requiring contributions from many different kinds of people: from theoreticians to technicians; from those who grasp the big picture to those who worry over details. To make meaningful comparisons of “success” therefore requires a way of comparing very different contributions. Christianity finds itself in a similar situation when it asserts that the Church is like a body: how can one decide if the foot or the hand is the more successful body part? This talk considers what science can learn from Christianity in approaching this conundrum.

Part 2: Prof Pauline Chiu

“Success” in any pursuit – from construction to demolition – can only be judged against the intended outcome. Different people have various views of the “proper” intended outcomes of a Christian academic scientist’s work. These include (but are by no means limited to) answering fundamental questions, developing technological solutions to help people, securing funding for the department, and winning people for Christ. This talk considers the goal of a Christian academic scientist’s work, and what that means in practice.

Part 3:

Having discussed the nature of success in science, we recognise that many people attending these talks are not scientists. This final interactive session will take ideas and principles outlined in Parts 1 & 2, and see how they extend to other fields of enterprise such as education, banking, creative arts, and the church.