

# Survey: 1 in 3 Scientists Believe in God

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About one out of every three scientists in the United States professed believing in God, a recent survey found. That figure is strikingly lower than the proportion of the general American public that say they believe in God (83 percent), according to the report by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

However, a Christian biochemist after examining the report said the comparably small number of scientists who believe in God is nothing to be alarmed over.

Dr. Fazale Rana, vice president of research and apologetics at Reasons to Believe ministry, said the percentage of American scientists who believe in God has remained constant for more than three-quarters of a century.

In the early 1920s, he explained, there was a similar survey conducted that found a similar proportion of scientists who believe in God.

"I see a lot of reason to be very encouraged by these results," said Rana, who has a Ph.D. in chemistry with an emphasis in biochemistry and was a senior scientist in product development for Procter & Gamble, to The Christian Post on Wednesday.

"The take home message is that if science and religion are incompatible then there is no way we would still see 30-40 percent of scientists acknowledge there is a God or higher power behind everything," he contended.

Besides asking about belief in God, the survey also asked the public and scientists about their belief in a higher power. Eighteen percent of scientists said they believe in a higher power or universal spirit, while 12 percent of the public said so.

But the religious belief of the public and scientists once again diverged in the category of not believing in God or a higher power. Only four percent of the public said they didn't believe in either, while a major portion of scientists (41 percent) said they didn't believe in God or any other higher power.

Rana, whose ministry's mission is to show that science and faith is compatible, said the discrepancy between scientists and the public on belief in God or a higher power is rooted in the nature of science itself.

The discipline of science calls for finding naturalistic explanations for phenomenon and operates on the philosophies of methodological naturalism and bench top [atheism](#) in which God is excluded.

For bench top atheism, Rana explained, even if a scientist believes in God he has to act as if he does not while engaging in science. And under methodological naturalism, a scientist is forced to explain events through naturalism.

"What I found encouraging is seeing such a high belief in scientists in the face of philosophical pressure," Rana commented.

Other interesting findings in the Pew report include huge differences between scientists who believe humans have evolved over time (87 percent) and Americans in general who hold this belief (32 percent); a large gap between the percentage of scientists who say the earth is warming because of human activity (84 percent) and the percentage of the public who agree with this statement (49 percent); and the proportion of scientists who favor federal funding for embryonic stem cell research (93 percent) and the general public who support such research (58 percent).

The report is based on two telephone surveys, the first on a sample of 2,001 adults, April 28-May 12, 2009, and the second on a sample of 1,005 adults, June 18-21, 2009. The survey of scientists was conducted online with a random sample of 2,533 members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), from May 1 to June 14, 2009. The AAAS is the world's largest general scientific society, and includes members representing all scientific fields.

Based in California, Reasons to Believe ministry seeks to show that science and faith are "allies, not enemies." The ministry's leaders help seekers and Christians to worship the Creator without fear of science through analyzing the latest scientific research publications, writing books and magazine articles, speaking at events, and doing media interviews.

