

Math and God

Math as a liberal art: The quadrivium was chosen to study God via the beauty of His creation.

Originally there were four liberal arts called the quadrivium: algebra, geometry, music, and astronomy. These four subjects were all mathematical. Music included a mathematical treatment of musical theory and astronomy was taught with quantitative and numerological components. These four subjects were chosen for their extraordinary potential to glorify God by illuminating the beauty, elegance, and rational structure of His creation. Later the trivium, grammar, rhetoric, and logic, were added to the standard curriculum to form the modern liberal arts. These three subjects were chosen to promote good communication. Thus the liberal arts are largely mathematical and point toward God.

Boolean algebra and theological debate:

Boolean algebra is the formal foundation for the field of logic. Boolean algebra was created by George Boole in order to help resolve theological disputes. God is rational, so our understanding of reason helps us to understand God.

Formal discussion of infinity:

God is infinite. It's hard, perhaps impossible, to understand infinity. Regardless, mathematicians have described infinity and use it routinely in calculus and analysis. A formal and logically correct discussion of infinity often stimulates and refines ideas about God.

Theology and Gdel's Incompleteness theorem:

Mathematicians have pursued the goal of finding the most fundamental axioms. We sought the axioms from which all the rest of mathematics would come as the logical conclusion. Gdel showed that the pursuit was futile. Specifically, Gdel found that in every complex axiomatic system there exists a statement that can neither be proven nor disproven.

God created people and requested that we worship and serve Him. Although He has the power to demand our service, He gave us the freedom of accepting or rejecting Him. God also created us as rational beings. Like a gentleman, God gave us an honest choice of whether to serve Him. He won't coerce us into doing so. In order to give us a truly free choice, God didn't force people to reject their own humanity in order to reject God. (I'm talking about the decision itself, not the consequences of the decision.) This is accomplished by providing little enough evidence that it can be overlooked or rejected by rational people. (See Romans 1:18-20.)

Proverbs 25:2

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;
to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

In this respect the mathematics faculty at North Park are kings. Our academic work includes research, an attempt to discover the truth about the universe. We take great pleasure in each new discovery. With each new discovery we're impressed with the depth and craftsmanship of creation, and thus the skill and profundity of God.

Math as creative act

The very first thing that the Bible tells us about God is that He created the universe. People were created in God's image. As being in God's image people have a God-given innate desire to create things. In creating good things we emulate God. Although some people prefer to create physical things with their hands, mathematicians enjoy creating ideas, creating methods, and contributing to the design phase in the creation of physical things.