

How can the conceptions of religious science teachers and scientists toward evolution-religion relationship, enhance the teaching of evolution in class?

The presumed conflict between religion and evolution is considered as one of the main causes for rejection of evolution around the world. However, there is a unique group of religious people that accept, study, and teach evolution. The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the conception of such people toward the relationship between evolution and religion and the factors that influence their conception. Towards this end, religious biology teachers (n=10) and scientists (n=10) were surveyed and subsequently interviewed about their conception toward evolution and religion and the factors that may influence their conception. It was found that the interpretation of the bible as a moral guidance, instead a book of science, is a main idea in the participants' conception. Understanding the nature of science may enable to discuss the differences between science and religion. Most participants emphasized that their conception toward evolution (acceptance \ rejection) was influenced by their parents' and teachers' positive\negative approach toward science, respectively. Participants that rejected evolution in the past emphasized that the exposure to scientific knowledge alone was not enough to decrease their rejection, while the exposure to the possible compatibility between religion and evolution promoted their acceptance of evolution. These findings may help teachers in promoting religious affiliated students toward better learning of evolution and toward meaningful learning of science in general.