

Science and Christianity – Friends or Foes?  
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

*“In science we are thinking God’s thoughts after him.”  
Astronomer Johannes Kepler*

It is well documented that science, as we know it, had its beginnings in that period of history known as Christendom. Prior to that, animism, the idea of an enchanted universe, based on superstition and folklore, was prevalent. Then came polytheistic religions with their assortment of god’s.

Christianity, by contrast, emphasized the importance of reason and theological beliefs about man’s relationship to God. In Europe, the first universities were defined as places to gain knowledge about the “Universe.” Theology was regarded as the Queen of sciences because it held the key to ultimate truth about reality.

The following is a partial list of early scientists who were Christians: Copernicus, Kepler, Descartes, Mandel, Galileo, Boyle, Newton, Cuvier, Harvey, Faraday, Priestey, Pasteur and many others. These leading scientists professed a humble faith in God, not atheism. Where would modern science be today without them? They saw God as the Creator and Sustainer of the predictable, natural laws upon which all scientists based their experiments and theories.

In contrast to secular thinking, the Hebrew – Christian worldview affirms that an intelligent God created an intelligent universe outside himself, and therefore man, by use of his intellect, can investigate and discover its form and hidden secrets. In fact, science as we know it today may never have developed without this biblical world-view and sense of moral obligation. If we did not live in an orderly universe, our scientists could make no deductions about what would happen next. Charles Colson made the astute observation that “scientists who reject Christian faith are actually cutting off the branch they are sitting on.”

I believe that science and Christianity have important things to say to one another. Science can purify religion from superstition and fanaticism; religion can purify science from arrogance and false absolutes. They both can interact, correct and enhance each other in regard to ethical issues facing our society such as the use of nuclear energy, assisted suicide and global warming.

Do true Christianity and science conflict with each other? I like the answer given by freelance writers Dale and Sandy Larsen: “Are they compatible? Yes and no. True biblical Christianity is fully compatible with intelligent honest, open –minded science which take into account the possibility that there is Someone besides this physical universe, a reality independent from the universe yet intimately involved in it.”

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”(Genesis 1:1). This is not a statement of blind faith. Rather it can be verified by thousands of observation mankind can make.

Therefore, with heads full of knowledge and hearts full of faith and longing, let us not be afraid to search for truth, wherever it leads. And in the spirit of awe and humility, we will discover ONE who has placed within the heart of his creation this longing for harmony with Himself.

*“It is hard to be an honest scientist these days who is an atheist.” Lee Strobel*