

SCIENCE AND RELIGION II

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Thanks to Lew Dudderidge for again inviting me to participate in this role. I also thank Shannon West for choosing the Gathering Thought for today and Tim Olfert for selecting all the music.

A year ago tomorrow, I shared this podium with Jim London, and I dedicate this talk to his memory.

I want to talk about the convergence of science and religion. It so happened last year that I had read a couple of interesting books written by two eminent scientists that very strongly imply that science and religion are moving philosophically very much closer together. I believe we are witnessing a long overdue convergence of science and religion. Today's talk follows up with the good news that recently physicists have shown that the outcome of a photon (particle of light) experiment appears to be determined by the consciousness of the human observer.

The two books were: (1) "The Language of God, A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief", by: Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., the director of the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He led the successful effort to complete the Human Genome Project; and (2) "The God Theory, Universes, Zero-Point Fields, and What's Behind It All", by Dr. Bernard Haisch; who by the way, started his education in a seminary, but after a year changed to study physics...in fact, astrophysics. Among many other career accomplishments, he has published over 130 scientific papers in peer reviewed journals.

Although there have been many other scientists (Jeans, Eddington, Einstein) suggesting the possible coming together of science and spirituality, both of these eminent researchers (Collins and Haisch) have come out strongly to challenge their respective peer groups, and the world's clergy, to examine their dogmatic views about appropriate scientific data that may collide with religion and spirituality.

But first, a little background.

You and I are on a spiritual journey...today is but a brief sojourn on planet earth traveling once a year around the sun. The nature of the remainder of our journey remains unclear, but our instinct compels us to turn increasingly to the spiritual realm as we orbit the sun.

Our solar system is located in a remote corner of our Milky Way galaxy, which is but one of billions of far flung galaxies in the universe. Distances are measured by light years: the distance light travels in one year at 186,000 miles per second!

We think this all started with the "big bang" 14 billion years ago...

...before that there was...no light...no time...no space.

"Our sun is a second generation white dwarf. [In] a huge nuclear fusion reactor, the enormous temperatures and pressure created by gravity squeeze four atoms of hydrogen together to form one of helium, releasing energy that reaches us as sunlight. The hydrogen in stars eventually runs out and they collapse. Temperatures soar and the helium fuses into new elements, carbon,

oxygen and nitrogen. (Tweed, p.50)

Our bodies consist largely of just three elements: oxygen, carbon and hydrogen; together they make up 94% of our chemistry ... and they came from factory suns!

To quote Carl Sagan: "We are made of star stuff"... I'll come back to carbon in a moment.

However, we know we are more than just chemicals: we all have a conscious, thinking, reasoning mind. Where might this inner spark come from?

Both authors discuss the improbability of our earth and us existing at all:

"...there are fifteen physical constants whose values current theory is unable to predict. They are givens: they simply have the value that they have. This list includes the speed of light, the strength of (the weak and strong) nuclear forces, various parameters associated with electromagnetism, and the force of gravity. The chance that all of these constants would take on the values necessary to result in a stable universe capable of sustaining complex life forms is almost infinitesimal. And yet those are exactly the parameters that we observe. In sum, our universe is wildly improbable. (Collins, "The Language of God", p.74)

As I just mentioned, carbon is created in factory suns. We hear a lot of hype these days about carbon: 'carbon foot print', 'carbon credits', 'carbon market', 'carbon offsets', etc. all in the context of global warming...carbon has become a political football. Carbon dioxide, a so called 'greenhouse gas', is neither toxic nor a pollutant: we breathe it out, trees use it up and make oxygen for us to breathe in; CO₂ puts the bubbly in your ginger ale! The myth being propagated (*a la* Al Gore) claims that global warming is caused by human activity; and this flies in the face of hundreds of scientific studies that clearly show other causes: cycles of the sun for example...I say: 'such arrogance'! (Robinson, *et al*)

[ABSTRACT A review of the re search literature concerning the environmental consequences of increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide leads to the conclusion that in creases during the 20th and early 21st centuries have produced no deleterious effects upon Earth's weather and climate. Increased carbon dioxide has, however, markedly in creased plant growth. Pre dictions of harmful climatic effects due to future in creases in hydrocarbon use and minor green house gases like CO₂ do not conform to current experimental knowledge. The environmental effects of rapid expansion of the nuclear and hydrocarbon energy industries are discussed.]

But, I digress.

How many of you are wearing one or more diamonds today?

As most of you know, diamond is the purest and most stable form of carbon. That's good news, right?

Now, if we look at the nucleus of carbon we see 6 neutrons hugging 6 protons, giving the atom its inherent nuclear stability, scientists have concluded that:

*“... even with a minimal change of 0.4% in the strength of the nuclear (N-N) [binding] force, carbon-based life appears to be impossible, since all the stars then would produce either almost solely carbon **or** oxygen, but could not produce both elements.
(Heinz Oberhammer)*

We simply would not be here! Life on earth would not exist!

The second book I read was “The God Theory, Universes, Zero-Point Fields, and What's Behind It All”, by Dr. Haisch.

So what is the “God Theory”? Haisch says:

*“I offer a genuine insight into how you can, and should, be a rational, science-believing human being and at the same time know that you are also an immortal spiritual being, **a spark of God.**”*

He proposes an infinite consciousness, **outside of space and before time**, called God. He examines creation as having first occurred as a divine thought by this infinite consciousness.

“The single difference between the theory I propose and the ideas current in modern astrophysics is that I assume that an infinite conscious intelligence preexists. The evidence for the existence of an infinite conscious intelligence is abundant in the accounts of the mystics and the meditative, prayerful, and sometimes spontaneous exceptional experiences of human beings throughout history.”

And, he writes that we know some important facts:

*“We are here.
Our universe exists.
A creation has taken place.”*

As recorded in the Bible, creation began with “Let there be light”. Haisch uses a lot of heavy duty physics including Einstein's relativistic theory to explain creation and the existence of matter. He uses the analogy of white light (God) being split into a multitude of colours to represent the “spark of God” in every human being. He believes our inner consciousness has in it a small part of God's consciousness.

Furthermore, he proposes a new rather startling role for light:

“...light becomes the fundamental thing whose propagation determines the flow of time and the measure of distance. We can almost say that light creates space-time. I suggest here that light, in the form of a universal electromagnetic [zero-point] field, also creates and sustains the world of matter that fills space-time. Thus the words, “Let there be light,” may express more than a poetic mythology after all.”

“The God Theory” is loaded with mind expanding theoretical physics; it may not be for general

reading. But he deals with light, gravity, electrodynamics, nuclear forces, quantum physics, zero-point fields, etc., only to the degree needed to keep his skeptical scientifically trained readers engaged.

The really surprising part of the theory, he states:

“In the physics laboratories of today, we acknowledge an enigmatic, but undeniable relationship between consciousness and the outcome of quantum experiments. In the history of mankind, we acknowledge that the aggregate of direct human experience does not fit within the artificial confines of physical laws. There is simply more to reality than physics, something the majority of humanity seems to know intuitively.

Within the past year, the results of quantum physics experiments leave no doubt that conscious thought does influence the outcome of carefully performed experiments in the laboratory. In a recent radio interview (www.coasttocoastam.com), Haisch states that:

“Consciousness makes reality come to life (quantum entanglement of photons): the outcome depends entirely on the observation being made by an observer... even though the outcomes themselves may be separated by large distances.

Finally, in another related book (suggested by Haisch),

“The most successful theory in all of science--and the basis of one third of our economy--says the strangest things about the world and about us. Can you believe that physical reality is created by our observation of it? Physicists were forced to this conclusion, the quantum enigma, by what they observed in their laboratories. Trying to understand the atom, physicists built quantum mechanics and found, to their embarrassment, that their theory intimately connects consciousness with the physical world. [Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness, by Rosenblum and Kuttner]

This is your new reading assignment!

In conclusion, Dr. Collins urges scientists to realize:

“Life is short. The death rate will be one per person for the foreseeable future. Opening one's self to the life of the spirit can be indescribably enriching. Don't put off a consideration of these questions of eternal significance until some personal crisis or advancing age forces a recognition of spiritual impoverishment.

We all should follow that advice.

AMEN.

[Gathering Thought: Science and religion are two windows that people look through, trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here. The two windows give different views, but they look out at the same universe. Both views are one-sided, neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And both are worthy of respect. *Freeman Dyson.*]

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ARTHUR B. ROBINSON, NOAH E. ROBINSON, AND WILLIE SOON

Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, 2251 Dick George Road, Cave Junction, Oregon 97523

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<http://www.amazon.ca/> Search: ‘Rosenblum and Kuttner’

Additional reading:

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