

© Rev. David J. Huber, 2008
Clergy Column, Leader-Telegram
April 12, 2008

Not Mutually Exclusive

I have spent most of my life in the worlds of the church and of science. Beginning in childhood, I have been fascinated by scientific and faith revelations. The science fascination led me to study engineering in college, and to take as many physics classes as possible. As you can tell by my byline, the faith fascination led me to answer God's call to become one of Christ's ordained servants. One of the few ministers with degrees in science and divinity. It is not as odd of a path as one might think, because to me the fence between science and faith was mostly non-existent. Science and math classes revealed Creation's beauty and godly coherence. Church activities and scripture revealed the miracle of God's saving grace and loving presence in history. Science constantly expands the immensity of God's story and creative presence in the long history of the universe. Geology uncovers new depths of evolutionary history. Archeology shines new light on biblical stories and of the entire human narrative. Physics reveals a cosmos of staggering complexity and simplicity. Hubble Telescope photos offer glimpses of unforeseen wonder. Advances in telescope technology allow us to peer further into space and history, necessitating we shed our belief in a relatively young galaxy that was the entire universe, to knowing ours is but one of billions of galaxies in a universe almost fourteen billion years old. Biology and genetics reveals a life pattern millions of years in the evolving. To think that God, the Alpha and the Omega, Beginning and End, designed all this, watches over it all, and became incarnate in it staggers my imagination.

The journey in these two worlds of science and faith, however, is sometimes difficult. Some voices say that I cannot live in both, and must choose only one. But I cannot choose, because they are both true and real. I cannot choose because they are not separate worlds to choose between, but are, in fact, the same world. My epiphany of this truth came in a college quantum mechanics class during a lecture on Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principal. I saw that science and faith are not separate worlds opposed to one another, but are one and the same. To talk science is to talk about God's Creation. To talk faith is to talk of God's relationship with that creation and with us. Choosing just one seems both intellectually and faithfully dishonest. I have had too many "Mountaintop experiences" of God's presence to give up my faith. Science has far too much proof and verification to casually dismiss it. Both are attempts to understand a mysterious but knowable God.

Science shows us a creative God who also gave us the capacity to know that creativity. The Bible, through poetry, history, and the language of mystery, gives us the tools to put scientific truth in a faith context, and faith claims into a scientific context. Bringing scriptural and scientific revelations into dialog reveals a God more surprising than we ever thought. That dialog shows us a God who gently and patiently molded the universe over vast expanses of time. A God who created stars that burn brightly for millions of years and then expel the elements that form

planets, solar systems, and new stars. And us. Carl Sagan said we are made of star-stuff. We are. So is the entire universe. Being star-stuff, being created by God, is the common thread of all Creation. God, the ultimate poet, then formed us out of that star stuff, out of earth, over long millennia of evolutionary growth to be in relationship with God. We are citizens not just of our nation or planet, but of everything that exists. Our relational God created and continues to create a relational universe. The Creator of a universe that is almost 14 billion light years big, wants to love us and be loved by us. Wow!

My faith and my beliefs about God have been molded and shaped by both scripture and science. One of my favorite scriptural passages is from Psalm 139: “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.” Fearfully and wonderfully made indeed! And wonderful God’s works are! Works that we know through experience and scripture and Hubble photographs and cyclotron experiments. If you are as fascinated by this as I am, or are interested in the ethics of technology, I invite you to the United Church of Christ’s new initiative, “Not Mutually Exclusive” at <http://www.ucc.org/not-mutually-exclusive>. Scriptural and scientific revelation truly are not mutually exclusive, but are both part and parcel of God’s fearful and wonderful Creation.