

Religion and science coexist in evolutionary theory

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The Christian stereotype has been around for a long time, one of the keywords being anti-science (evolutionary theory in particular) or plain stupid. It is obvious why the battle between religion and science portrayed in pop culture and common belief seems plausible; the Genesis six-day story versus the physics 14 billion-year theory triggers a red flag immediately. And while scientists have their replicable experiments, measurable methods and observable results, theologians fall short on those kinds of scientific facts and evidence. However, there are some solid, testable facts about science and religion/Christianity that you may not know.

Francis Collins, director of National Institute of Health, is a prestigious geneticist and medical doctor. He is best known for his leadership of the Human Genome Project and landmark discoveries of disease genes. Described by the Endocrine Society as “one of the most accomplished scientists of our time,” Francis Collins is also a Christian, a Christian by choice and a Christian who takes his religious belief seriously. Indeed, he is a Christian who believes in and provides evidence for — you got it — the evolutionary theory.

I am not going to give a random guess or pick some numbers from Google to show how many Christians do not see Darwin as an enemy because that is not the reason why I write this piece. Francis Collins said in an interview, “I actually do not believe that there are any collisions between what I believe as a Christian and what I know and have learned about as a scientist.” But many are not like that. An award-winning chemistry professor who is also a faithful Christian once said in a meeting that he had felt like he was living a “double-life.” That is why I am writing this guest column. I never deny the existence of border between religion and science, nor do I see it as a battlefield.

Some are afraid that science is offensive to God. The Bible says, “love your God with all your mind.” If we are blessed with a mind that can think, reason, question and explore, it is a God-given talent. Why not use it? A handyman wouldn't find it offensive to use his “handyman” talent to build a shelf. Then why is it offensive to use our mind to conduct scientific research? We are people, not puppets — isn't it great? Besides, science is not just mathematical equations, tubes, DNA and things like that. When a handyman builds a shelf, there is science in it. We are experiencing science in so many ways that we may not even be aware of.

The earliest universities in Western Europe were developed under the aegis of the Catholic Church. Nicholas Copernicus, Sir Francis Bacon and Johannes Kepler were some of the pioneer scientists who developed the basis for modern astronomy, philosophy and scientific methods in general. They were all Christian. Galileo Galilei, widely known for his conflict with the Roman Catholic Church, defended the Bible Scripture while teaching his seemingly contradicting endings. Today in Europe, the United States and around the world there are many universities administered by various churches and researchers in those universities are continuously contributing to the science community. There are numerous brilliant atheist scientists in the community as well. My point is that the relationship between science and religion, Christian or not, does not have to be, or may not be what most perceive.

Back to the heated evolution versus creation question before I wrap up: When I write a program or bake a cake, I take steps to develop it. The segments of codes did this and that before they all came

together and accomplished the bigger project that I intended to when I started. The flour and eggs and shortening made a batter and later turned into a cake. That is the process I choose to take. So if God decided to use the evolutionary process as the mechanism to achieve what He was intended to, who are we to say “No?”

I am passionate about the fascinating beauty of science and religion, both of which make me humble. If science has taught us one thing, that would be to treat all theories and hypotheses fairly. And God tells us to love. There is so much to discover in both fields and the in-between. For those who are interested, I recommend the course series Religion and Science: Pathways to Truth.