In William Steig’s *Yellow & Pink* two wooden figures, one painted yellow and the other pink, wake up to find themselves lying on an old newspaper in the hot sun. Eventually, Yellow sits up and asks, "Do you know what we're doing here?" The marionettes debate over how they came into existence. Pink replied, "Someone must have made us." Yellow disagrees. "I say we're an accident." He proceeds to present the following theory: A branch broke off a tree fell on a sharp rock which split one end of the branch into two legs. Then the wind sent it tumbling down a hill until it was chipped and shaped. Perhaps a flash of lightning struck in such a way as to splinter the wood into arms and fingers. Eyes were then formed by woodpeckers boring in the wood. "With enough time," Yellow concludes, “A thousand, a million, maybe two and a half million years, lots of unusual things could happen. Why not us?"

Their debate, however, is cut off by the appearance of a man from a nearby house. He strolls over to the marionettes, picks them up, and checks their paint. "Nice and dry," he observes. Tucking them under his arm, he heads back toward the house. Peering out from under the man's arm, Yellow whispers to Pink, "Who is this guy?"

Is the universe accidental or the product of a designer? Is it all by chance or is there a Creator? The universe is an incredibly complex, finely-tuned masterpiece. Physicists point out that if even one of the four basic forces of nature – gravity, the weak nuclear force, the electromagnetic force, the strong nuclear force – were weaker or stronger, then a life-sustaining universe would be impossible. In the realm of biology, the probability of life occurring by accident is off the scale.

A chance of 1 out of 1,000,000,000,000,000 (quadrillion, 10 with 14 zeros) is considered a virtual impossibility. But when DNA co-discoverer Francis Crick calculated the possibility of a simple protein sequence of 200 amino-acids (much simpler than a DNA molecule) originating spontaneously, his figure was 10 with 26 zeroes after it.

Not known to be sympathetic to the miraculous, Dr. Crick nevertheless wrote, "The origin of life seems almost to be a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going."

Astrophysicist Sir Fred Hoyle was an atheist. Yet after a lifetime of studying the evidence even he had to admit:

If one proceeds directly and straightforwardly in this matter, without being deflected by a fear of incurring the wrath of scientific opinion, one arrives at the conclusion that biomaterials with their amazing measure or order must be the outcome of intelligent design. No other possibility I have been able to think of. The notion that … the operating
program of a living cell could be arrived at by chance in a primordial organic soup here on the Earth is evidently nonsense of a high order.

Hoyle said the belief in the accidental formation of even the simplest cell is similar to believing that “a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.” It is obvious that accidents do not make things more orderly and complex. Accidents cause destruction. When you lost power this past week you knew it was the result of an accident. As you shivered in the dark and cold, you did not expect the wind or a tree branch to accidentally restore the electric grid. You knew it would only happen by the hand of a hardworking PECO electrician. It seems obvious that so complex a creation had a Creator.

Yet ever since the scientific revolution in the 17th century, we’ve lived with the popular belief that science and faith are fighting one another, that biology and the Bible oppose each other, that one must choose between logical, rational exploration and irrational, wishful belief. History records many famous debates: from the heresy trials of Galileo before the Inquisition, to the face off between Bishop Wilberforce and Thomas Huxley over Darwin’s theories, the Scopes Monkey trial between Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryant, down to the more recent court case near Pittsburgh over the teaching of Intelligent Design in schools. Like great rams knocking heads, Science and Faith seem perpetually locked in a battle. Yet must there be a debate? Isn’t this the result of a mutual misunderstanding on both parts?

Obviously, both fields are extremely complex and deserve deep understanding and investigation. Though he did not believe in a personal God, Einstein once said, “Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind.” We need to move beyond debate.

Dr. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen of Princeton Seminary says that instead of a debate or duel, Science and Faith could come together in a Duet. In a duet, two voices or instruments create different lines of music in harmony with one another. Science and faith are two ways to search for Truth which need not compete with each other. In fact, when viewed as a duet instead of a duel they can, together, give us a richer deeper understanding of Truth. John Polkinghorne is a living duet. In his first career, Polkinghorne worked for 25 years on particle physics at Cambridge University where he was on the team that discovered quarks – the tiniest particles which make up the atom. He was inducted into the Royal Society. Then, in 1977, he “turned his collar around” and became an ordained priest in the Anglican Church. His desire is to demonstrate how science and religion can fit together.

Underlying all…is the issue of truth. Science doesn’t tell us all the truth but it certainly tells us some of the truth. I think our religious insights tell us a deeper, more important truth. And those of us who are seeking to serve the God of truth don’t need to fear truth from whatever source it comes.

I very much believe in the unity of knowledge and truth…I want to hold together my scientific insights and my religious beliefs.
[When I] became an Anglican priest and began to think about theology in a serious way my life changed in all sorts of ways…but not in relation to the search for truth. “Is it truth?” that’s the vital question.¹

So how do faith and science begin to play their duet?

First, **Faith Encourages Us to Pursue Science.** Long ago, King David wrote:

> The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. Psalm 19:1-4.

Faith tells us to study the stars, scale the mountains, dive into the deep, delve into the atom because there we will witness God’s hand. Creation is speaking to us. The Universe is praising its Maker. Why did the scientific revolution arise in Christian Europe? Believers studied the creation in order to understand the mind of God. The great scientists we revere: Copernicus, Boyle, Mendel, Kepler, Faraday and Isaac Newton were all Christians. Even Galileo, considered by many to be the father of modern science and often pictured as battling a repressive Church, was in fact a devout Catholic. In 1613 he wrote in a letter, “the holy Bible and the phenomena of nature proceed alike from the divine Word”² More recently physicist Arno Penzias, who won the Nobel Prize in physics for confirming the Big Bang, said,

> The best data we have (concerning the origin of the universe) are exactly what I would have predicted, had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms and the Bible as a whole.

So as you study physics, biology or chemistry, look for the hand of God and you will start to understand how your Creator thinks.

Instead of competing, **Faith and Science Compliment Each Other.** Psalm 19 begins by staring up in wonder at the starry skies. Then it makes a sudden shift from God’s world to God’s Word.

> The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. Psalm 19:7-9.

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Why this change? David is telling us a truth Galileo discovered centuries later: There are two big books, the book of nature and the book of super nature, the Bible. By studying the book of nature, science helps us learn some of God’s work. But there is a limit to what it can tell us. It can tell us how plants and planets, animals and atoms are put together and how they work. It cannot tell us why we are here. Science is unable to explain our purpose or how we should act. It can unleash the power God put into creation but it cannot tell us how to use it responsibly. Science explains how. Faith reveals why. That is not something we can discover on our own. It must be revealed to us by our Creator. God does this first through Jesus Christ and second through the Word and the Holy Spirit. David describes God’s Word as a treasure.

They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:10-11.

The Bible gives us both warning and reward. It keeps us on the right path. John Polkinghorne says there is a time when testing must give way to trusting. So science tells us about life and Faith tells the way to live. We need both. Even Stephen Hawking’s brilliant mind confesses that it reaches a limit here.

Although science may solve the problem of how the universe began, it cannot answer the question: why does the universe bother to exist? I don’t know the answer to that.

But God does. He tells us the answer in His Word. I find many Christians have a very sophisticated knowledge of science and technology but their knowledge about Scripture and theology is still fuzzy and foggy. Perhaps this is due to the fact their understanding of the faith is still back in Sunday School. Let me encourage you to sharpen your knowledge of faith by reading Scripture daily, by getting into a Growth Group, by taking Alpha. All around me I see adults deepening their faith. It’s wonderful to see the growth.

Third, Faith and Science Both Need Humility. David ends his Psalm,

Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:12-14

Sometimes David knowingly gave into temptation. At other moments his faults were hidden from him. Yet either way, the powerful King of Israel humbly confessed his sins to the Lord, His Rock and His Redeemer. During the four hundred year conflict between faith and science there has been a great need for humility. Galileo was really criticizing Aristotle and Ptolemy, two ancient Greek scientists, not the Bible. Yet the Church became defensive and went on the offensive instead of listening to Galileo. In that sad moment, Christians used power instead of humility. Yet some scientists today loudly proclaim that faith is a myth, the Bible a bunch of legends and Christianity is about to disappear. When Science throws off humility it begins to
play god. And as we have witnessed when Science plays god it can unleash a holocaust beyond its control.

There was no question that Albert Einstein’s was brilliant. Yet he displayed great humility when he said:

"I'm not an atheist. The problem involved is too vast for our limited minds. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangement of the books, but doesn't know what it is. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God. We see the universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws, but only dimly understand these laws. The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mysterious. He, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle. In this sense, and in this sense only, I am a devoutly religious man."

Now that God, which the brilliant Einstein only dimly understood, can be known by you no matter what your IQ. John Polkinghorne concludes,

If working in science teaches you anything it is that the physical world is surprising. Now if the physical world surprises us it wouldn’t be very odd really if God also turned out to be rather surprising.

I’m a Christian and the heart of Christian belief is that God – the mysterious, invisible God – has acted to make God’s nature known in the clearest possible terms by actually living the life of a human being: Jesus Christ.

That’s an extraordinary, exciting idea and I happen to believe a true idea.

God gave you two eyes to see His world: faith and science. Use both of them and you will know the Truth.

And, as Jesus says, the Truth will set you free (John 8:32).

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