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Editorial

Science and Religion as Companions

With the loud protests of a small number of religious groups over teaching scientific concepts like evolution along side the equally loud proclamations of a few scientists with personal, anti-religious philosophies, it can sometimes seem as though science and religion are at war. News reports often want to portray this picture of the alleged conflict between science and religion. The attention given to such clashes ignores the far more numerous cases in which science and religion harmoniously, and even synergistically, coexist.

It may be noted that people of many different faiths and levels of scientific expertise see no contradiction at all between science and religion. Many simply acknowledge that the two institutions deal with different realms of human experience. Science investigates the natural world, while religion deals with the spiritual and supernatural – hence, the two can be complementary and not contradictory. Many religious organizations have issued statements declaring that there need not be any conflict between religious faith and the scientific perspective on evolution, notes Understanding Science website (Understanding Science, 2021).

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Furthermore, the site notes that one certainly doesn't have to be an atheist to become a scientist. A 2005 survey of scientists at top research universities found that more than 48% had a religious affiliation and more than 75% believe that religions convey important truths. Some scientists – like Francis Collins, former director of the National Human Genome Research Institute and George Coyne, astronomer and priest – have been outspoken about the satisfaction they find in viewing the world through both a scientific lens and one of personal faith.

This is not to suggest that science and religion *never* come into conflict. Though the two generally deal with different realms (natural and spiritual), disagreements do arise about where the boundaries between these realms lie when dealing with questions at their interface. Despite some minor clashes, we need to remember that behind the scenes and out of the spotlight, many cases exist in which religious and scientific perspectives present no conflict at all. Thousands of scientists busily carry out their research while maintaining personal spiritual beliefs, and an even larger number of everyday folks fruitfully view the natural world through an evidence-based, scientific lens and the supernatural world through a spiritual lens. Accepting a scientific worldview does not require giving up religious faith. Together they can make a better world. They can walk together as friends and companions in the common search for truth and wisdom.

The articles in this volume deal with science, philosophy and religion, to enrich one another.

The Editor

Reference

Understanding Science. (2021). *Science and religion: Reconcilable differences*. How Science Really Works. Retrieved May 4, 2021, from https://undsci.berkeley.edu/article/science_religion