

God - Providence and Science

By John Van Sloten

April 23, 2006

[NOVA clip, HR 3; CH 6 “As the classic story goes... to “but to a physicist its also a problem (Physicist)”]

Like many of us... Physicists like facts... they like **measurable phenomena... quantifiable data... reliable formulae...** they're uneasy when bump up against **philosophy...** or (God help them) **theology!**

Yet the “Big bang theory” begs these bigger questions! You can only **go back so far** before run into “**First Cause**” **question...** can only explore so deep into **space or into an atom** b/f unknowns are so great questions so many **find yourself expressing more faith than science would normally allow!**

(1)Infinity in all directions... **LONG PAUSE** It begs the bigger question... ‘**Hows**’ and ‘**Whys**’ are **seemingly, & inevitably inseparable** in these places.

So how does **God** fit in with **Big Bang** theory?... By DEFN certainly qualify as ‘**first cause**’ (**0 is infinite!**) only kind of being **create out of nothing** (ex nihilo) and to **possess a mind** to conceive of such a **mysterious, amazing, beautiful, intricate, compelling** multi-billion year long plan just **sublime! PAUSE...**

BB theory brings me to my knees... **PAUSE...** causes me to **worship...** (2)“The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies; yet their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to all the world.” Psalm 19:1-4

God’s words via the universe!... **PAUSE...** **Science is the language with which we read those words...** Quantum mechanics gives us **more to worship God with!**... Physics paints a fuller picture of the **creation that God is provident with** (made and cares for!) **PAUSE...** [(4) **BIG BANG QUOTE...** P123 Hoezee] (5)Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone- while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?” Job 38:7

The way things are perfect for life!... timing, makeup, tilt of earth’s axis, chemical balance of atmosphere, **everything** is just right... [**ANTHROPIC PRINCIPLE**] no scientist disagrees on facts... we do disagree on why [**WEAK(multiple universes) vs STRONG (God)**]

“You are made of stardust...out of the dust of the earth” by God or by chance?... all depends where you put your faith. **PAUSE..** [“**We are Stardust, we are golden... and we’ve got to get ourselves back to the Gaaaaarden!**”]

“Science shows us who God really is... and over just how much he cares!”... **PAUSE...** The week remembered classic providence parable... [**BIRDS... FLOWERS... when I added Quarks/gravitons/ and strings(one direction)... gravity, worm holes & entire galaxies(another) B. Bang past... ever expanding universal future blown away!**]

And that we’ve been **given minds** to know this stuff... (6)There is a congruence between our minds and the universe, between the rationality experienced within and the rationality observed without.” John Polkinghorne **PAUSE... minds to**

know the Maker of this stuff... with a *different kind* of knowing than science offers... & with the *same kind*!

(7)“When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers-- the moon and the stars you have set in place what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us? For you made us only a little lower than God, and you crowned us with glory and honor.” Ps 8:3-5, NLT
It’s just a different way of **knowing... *faith knowing*** doesn’t obliterate ***science knowing***... it enhances it, deepens it... brings **purpose, intent** and a **different kind of reason** to it!... **(8) We’re meant to reach...**

(Excursus tone)... **This is God’s world...** he made it the way it is...**exploring** that makeup is **exploring him celebrating** that makeup is **celebrating him**
“Scientific endeavor TACIT WORSHIP!... (know O or not!) Polkinghorne

Yet **church slammed Galileo**(17th century)... for many created **us/them battle**(afraid science de-bunk bible!) only gonna happen **read stuff into the bible that isn’t there...** or make **bible a science text... PAUSE**

It was the **Judeo Xn worldview got science going!**
As a way to know Creator/creation more... “that it was made by God” made it **compulsory** to study it more!

PAUSE... In some strange way Creation text keeps us from biblical misappropriation/ from putting God in too small a box!... **“Profound mysteries of created world shouldn’t just humble the scientists!”**

(off your soap box John...) **Science and Providence...**
that’s topic today... What else did physics teach me about the providential care of God?... Two other very cool ideas/truths I tripped on...

[(9) READ BLOG ENTRY Nov 2005] Get that?
Basically saying chaos of Quantum Mechanics (Heisenberg started it all by saying we can’t know where an electron is) **leaves room for God to intervene... System is not closed!... PAUSE...**

Then **“Scientists themselves may be the greatest proof of the possibility of a providentially intervening and involved God.”**

see what happened there? **“Quantum Physics opened the door to chaos w/opened the door to faith to God.”** (not talking Chaos from M. Smart!)
no room for God in ‘causality view’ earlier times!...

(10)“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?” Job 11:7 **(11)**“You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn’t been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears.” MT 13:11-12

Seemingly random, chaotic, those electrons... **here... there... then in both places... LONG PAUSE...**
both God and man... **PAUSE...** Father, Son and Holy Spirit... **PAUSE...** sovereign over all creation... yet giving us freewill... **all paradoxes find their permission in Quantum physics... or vica versa!**

(12)“Heisenberg says, “there is a higher power, not influenced by our wishes, which finally decides and judges.” Eddington says that our dropping causality as a result of the Principle of Indeterminacy “leaves us with no clear distinction between the Natural and the Supernatural.” (wait til you grasp string theory **[LINK]**)

And on that ever perplexing free will vs. Sovereignty point **[(13) READ p 139 Hoezee]** God giving the universe freedom... is that not a profound idea?...

What can freedom of **electron/string** teach us about our freedom?... and vica versa? (Start a geek group!)

PAUSE... EPR effect (butterfly effect relationality built into the very fabric of the cosmos!... reveal about God?)... so much more!... **all in God's creation book!** We need Science Know God more!... **Know JX more**

Close with 3 more quotes... all showing X's connection all of this [READ 3 QUOTES] **["The Son of God can never forget the physical wonders he made"]**

"For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels--everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment." Col 1:16-17

"The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens." Romans 8:19-21

"The Enthroned continued, "Look! I'm making everything new. Write it all down--each word dependable and accurate." Revelation 21:5 **everything from strings to the universe and all creation will sing!!!**

November 25, 2005

I've just picked up this book on Science and the Trinity written by British physicist/theologian John Polkinghorne. (What else would a person want to read on a Friday night?) It only took 5 pages before every atom in my mind exploded with epiphany. I had to put

the book down, and just sit there saying, "Yes... yes... yes!"

Polkinghorne was outlining a few introductory considerations and mentioned one biggy as being the question of how one can reconcile the belief that God is providentially working in and through the world, with the claim that science can empirically explain how all things work. A demanding question, "It asks in what way one might hope to understand divine providential action to be exercised in the kind of world whose processes are described by the orderly accounts that science seems to offer." Big problem right? It's what the false dichotomy of Faith vs Science is often founded upon (from both sides of the argument). But then he goes on to say...

"No fully agreed consensus has emerged from these discussions, but it has been widely recognized that the intrinsic unpredictability's that twentieth century physics has uncovered as limits on our knowledge of detailed behavior, both in quantum theory and in chaos theory, have significantly qualified the kind of merely mechanical account of physical process that previously had seemed to be the deliverance of science." (Stick with me on this, here's where it gets really cool...) "As a result, an honest appeal to science cannot be used to discredit belief in God's providence acting within the divinely ordained open grain of nature. Moreover, if creatures can act as agents in the world (a capacity that human beings directly experience but which itself is not, as yet, well understood in terms of a scientific account of detailed process), it would not seem reasonable to deny the possibility of some analogous capacity in the Creator."

(Freakin eh!) Get what he's saying? Already within our scientific "explained" world, human beings are making a difference, impacting what happens, affecting how things play out, even influencing what they are, or become. If that can happen through us, why couldn't it happen through God? Certainly it has to leave the door open! So cool. **Scientists themselves may be the greatest proof of the possibility of a providentially intervening and involved God.**

Core Values of this Series

1. God made it all, cares about it all, redeemed it all and is making it all new. Material world matters to God. Heaven is this made new!!!
2. Bible is a not a science textbook... not a how book but a why book (So if God made it over hundreds of millions of years, billions of years or 7 days... not a big deal, key is that he made it all! Same with evolution debate. Key is that human beings are God's pinnacle of creation!)
3. Science in its purest sense is value neutral and a gift from God. Science is a way that we can worship God. Some scientist's attach a naturalist worldview to their trade (Agnostic or Atheistic) and others don't.
4. When we talk science, we'll be talking about it in its purest sense, without the worldview baggage.

5. God reveals himself through the physical world. Science can teach us about the nature of God. Creation reflects its Creator; it's his megaphone. The bible is one of two books through which God speaks.
6. Physics will be a core focus in this series.

© 2006 John Van Sloten

Feel free to use sermons, ideas and illustrations but acknowledge the source of these.

If you know the source of a quote or illustration that is incorrectly acknowledged here,

please email me <johnvs@newhopechurch.ca>

Unless otherwise stated scripture references are taken from

The Message® or The New International Version®.