

St. John the Evangelist, Sunday November 1st, 2009
“A scientist’s story”

who am I? Thought I wanted to do research since secondary school, mid 1960s
Christian school, daily chapel, confirmed, but ... “just going with the flow”
Became Christian at University during 1st year undergraduate physics, 40 years
ago
during 1st few weeks (March - April 1969) brain desperately trying to catch up
with what was happening to me
actually, trying to work out what it all means ever since
Anselm - faith seeking understanding

what is faith? Trusting that God is the answer to every conceivable need and question
committing oneself to Jesus as the complete expression of God and the perfect
definition of what it is to be human
allowing the Spirit to permeate every aspect of being and action and to articulate
the person of Christ

what is science? A set of ways of asking questions and trying out answers about our world
and ourselves

are faith and science different? Yes! - faith trusts and science questions
but science has to have presuppositions, faith should be prepared to question

are they set against one another? By no means necessarily, but there are clear historical and
contemporary examples of antagonism

are they completely separate? (Stephen Gould - NOMA) - I don't think so, if nothing else I aim
to be one person

can they be integrated into a single comprehensive wisdom? - not by me! ... but ...

can they be in dialogue with each other? - I believe so
If there is dialogue, one should affect the other

is my science influenced by my faith?

- 1) science is carried out by particular people (with personalities!), different people have different strengths, gifts - Paul 1 Corinthians 12
- 2) my understanding is always incomplete, wrong, must be open to correction

is my faith affected by my science?

- 1) God is still creating; working in, through and with creation, us to bring about that new creation of which Eden is the dream, the prophecy this is what God is doing now, this is exciting, and God invites us to be partners in this grandest of all enterprises
- 2) seek to find ways of expressing (living out) and speaking about God that can be received by our contemporaries who think (or have been persuaded) that they have outgrown faith and God - Friedrich Schleiermacher "On religion: Speeches to its cultured despisers"

to a scientist: you can trust God; faith is not intellectual suicide; but God might well cause you to see your science, and yourself, in a new perspective

to a person of faith: don't be afraid to engage in thinking, it is one of God's gifts; in the end, faith depends on God's trustworthiness, not on your understanding what matters is that God holds on to you, not that you grasp hold of God

Jude 24-25: (Now) to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — to the only (wise) God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forever more! Amen.