Science and Faith Conflict: Fact or Fiction?

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Abstract: "I believe in science but not in religion" is a perspective that is becoming widespread among "Millennials" especially those who join the atheistic, agnostic, and freethinkers bandwagon. They view the relationship of faith and science as adversarial and that alliance with only one of them is imperative if one is to be reasonable. Thus the prevailing misconception: A person of science cannot be a person of faith and a person of faith cannot be a person of science. This article intends to address this issue. It argues that this conflict between faith and science originates from a certain erroneous understanding of the relationship between the two. Pointing out the problems that lead to the conflict thesis, namely scientific fundamentalism and ecclesiastical authoritarianism, this paper proposes that faith and science could well relate with each other by delineating their differences and autonomy while recognizing the possibility and necessity of dialogue and collaboration. It could then be upheld that to acknowledge the reliability of scientific truths does not necessarily entail the abandonment of religious faith and vice versa.

Key Words: relating faith and science, conflict thesis, epistemological and methodological differences, scientific fundamentalism, dialogue and integration

Introduction

One issue in fundamental theology and

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MST Review 19 no. 1 (2017): 98-116

contemporary apologetics that needs serious consideration is the ongoing debate between faith and science. Today, there are numerous people who still think that religion and science are incompatible. You can see them proliferating their views in social media, contemporary popular literatures, and even in some reputable academic settings. As a matter of fact, there are several best-selling books that were published in support of this assertion, e.g. Stephen Hawking's *The Grand Design,* Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion*, Christopher Hitchens' *God is not Great*, Sam Harris' *The End of Faith*, and Jerry Coyne's *Faith vs Fact*. These militant atheists aggressively propagate their scientistic worldview and voraciously attack on religion and its rightful role in public discourse. For them religion is just a remnant of a less enlightened age and it has no place in today's scientifically and technologically advanced society. They think that to believe in what science says is to be rationally superior because science is evidence-based; while to believe in what religion says is akin to believing in fairytales.

I am personally interested in this topic because in my experience of teaching university students, I have encountered the same problematic thought in some of them. Also, in my exposure to social media I have witnessed the prevalence of this misconception especially among "millennials."[1] According to last year's Pew survey in the United States, 49% of the respondents claim that their adherence to science is the reason why they do not anymore subscribe to religion.[2]

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[1] "Millennials" pertain to those who were born in the 1980s or 1990s. They are well-engaged with social networking and are usually technologically savvy.

[2] Michael Lipka, "Why America's 'Nones' Left Religion Behind," *Pew Research Center,* August 24, 2016, accessed February 25, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/24/why-americas-

In reaction to this, the popular social media Catholic evangelist and apologist, Bishop Robert Barron, pointed out that this misconception proliferates because teachers, catechists, evangelists, and academics within the Christian churches are probably not doing enough to keep the young people engaged in the faith and science discussions.[3]

As a participation in the discussions, this paper shall focus on the faith and science debate particularly its origin, substance, and the proposed approaches in relating the two camps.

Origin of the Debate

The most eminent cases used to support the conflict thesis of science and religion are that of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Charles Darwin (1809-82). However, in the case of Galileo, it could be argued that the main contention was on heliocentrism vs geocentrism and not on faith vs religion. Likewise, in the case of Darwin, the issue was about a fixed state cosmos and the struggle for cultural supremacy in the nineteenth century England and not on religion-science rivalry.[4] How then did the conflict thesis originate?

The Age of Enlightenment from the seventeenth century onwards was instrumental for the scientific revolution and the rise of modern science. Initially this was pushed and influenced by people who espoused the

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nones-left-religion-behind/.

[3] Robert Barron, "Apologists, Catechists, Theologians: Wake Up!," *Word on Fire,* August 30, 2016, accessed February 25, 2017, https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/article/apologists-catechists-theologians-wake-up/5257/.

[4] Allan Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," *Notes on Science & Christian Belief,* (Huntingdale, Victoria: ISCAST [Vic], 2009), p. 5-3.

Christian religion like Bacon, Boyle, Newton, Kepler, etc.[5] However, the situation led to a perception, and later on to the conviction, that scientific authority has now begun to replace religious authority. In the nineteenth century two famous works dealt particularly on this issue. These are the "History of the Conflict between Religion and Science" by William Draper (1874) and "A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom" by Andrew Dickson White (1896). These two books became popular and were reprinted repeatedly. Draper wrote his work years after the papal infallibility dogma was promulgated. He feared that Catholicism might repress the continuous expansion of human knowledge through the sciences. Meanwhile, White was enthused to write his book as a response to the criticisms against him by some religious figures during his presidency at Cornell University. He was not totally opposed to religion altogether but to "that same old mistaken conception of rigid Scriptural interpretation."[6]

Aside from these, there also was a clearer definition of the differences between science and religion. In the late nineteenth century, the neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth asserted that science and religion have different objects for study. Religion deals with matters about God and God's revelation while the sciences deal with the natural world and how to understand it.

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[5] Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," p. 5-3.

[6] Andrew Dickson White, *The Warfare of Science,* (New York: Appleton, 1876), p. 75 cited in David Wilson, "The Historiography of Science and Religion," *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia,* ed. Gary Ferngren, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), p. 3. There are those who interpret the biblical stories of creation (Gen 1-2) literally as if they are historical and cosmological accounts. Other examples of scriptural texts that have been misinterpreted are Lev 11: 9-12 (on dietary laws), Eccl 1:5 and Ps 96: 10 (texts used to support geocentrism).

Science does this through empirical investigation, whereas religion, given the limitation of human knowledge, is fully dependent on God's revelation in a mystical or a non-rational means. In the same vein, existential philosophers like Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Buber also acknowledged the basic epistemological difference between science and religion. Science is about the impersonal and objective knowledge (Buber's "I-it" relationship) while religion concerns with the personal and subjective knowledge (Buber's "I-Thou" relationship).[7]

In the twentieth century, J.Y. Simpson (1925) added a jargon of metaphor by propounding a struggle between science and religion in his book *Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion*. The conflict thesis earlier advocated by Draper and White has become the common supposition of popular science literature, the media, and a handful of earlier histories of science for almost a century. It has been deeply entrenched in the worldview of a lot of people since then despite the fact that, since the twentieth century, historians of science have already consistently argued against it and exposed its deficiencies.[8]

Even today there are schools of thought that perpetuate the faith and science conflict thesis. On one hand, there is scientific fundamentalism. This worldview insists that science is the sole authority and source of knowledge. There is a claim that science can explain everything and consequently makes religion

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[7] Stephen Meyer, "The Demarcation of Science and Religion," *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia,* ed. Gary Ferngren, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), p. 18.

[8] Colin Russel, "The Conflict of Science and Religion," *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia,* ed. Gary Ferngren, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), p. 12.

obsolete. This position is also known as scientism, scientific materialism, naturalism, or secular humanism.[9] This leads to an empiricist and atheistic worldview that discards any form of explanation and belief that is not based on empirical evidence. A milder version of this view is called scientific imperialism. While it recognizes the existence of the divine it nevertheless asserts that knowledge comes from scientific study and not through divine revelation.

Meanwhile, there was an ecclesiastical authoritarianism that was a defensive reaction to the burgeoning scientistic worldviews. It appeals to Church authority in order to counter the threat of science and scientism. For instance, in 1864 Pope Pius IX issued *The Syllabus of Errors* which declares that to think that science and philosophy could separate themselves from ecclesiastical authority is erroneous.[10] However, in the Second Vatican Council, this attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards sciences has changed as it declared them to be autonomous disciplines.[11] In the subsequent sections, the areas of struggle between faith and science, the deficiencies of the conflict theory, and some of the approaches in relating the two shall be further tackled.

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[9] Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," p. 5-4. See also Ted Peters, "Science and Theology: Toward Consonance," *Science & Theology: The New Consonance,* ed. Ted Peters (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), p. 13.

[10] Pope Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, 57, http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/dfg/amrl/syl-err.htm. See Ted Peters, "Science and Theology: Toward Consonance," pp. 13-15.

[11] See Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes,* 36, December 7, 1965, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. Hereafter cited as GS with paragraph number.

Main Areas of Contention

According to Peters, there are four main areas where the seeming contention between science and religion can be located. First is in the area of epistemology. Here, the main concern is whether what is known about the world through science can be integrated with what religion has to say about it. Otherwise, the conflict thesis finds its confirmation. The second area is in methodology. The distinction is made by acknowledging that science is based on facts while theology is derived from faith. This differentiates a naturalistic worldview from a religious worldview and therefore puts a demarcation line between science and religion.[12] The conflict thesis is sustained when religious worldview tries to interfere in the naturalistic explication of events especially in recourse to divine agency to explain bizarre phenomena. Since the two have different means for acquiring knowledge, the demarcation line has to be maintained in the way they explain phenomena. The third area lies in the field of ethics. There is a prevailing fear in society of the possible abandonment of ethical constraints, which is usually backed by religion, because of scientific progress. In order to maintain conventional moral certitudes, there has been a tendency for religion to be wary of scientific and technological progress. The fourth area arose from issues of social power. This is derived from the tension between the Church (sacred) and State (secular). The growing spirit of liberalism resulting from the Age of Enlightenment continues to threaten the authority of religion and its dominant role in society. Science was made accountable for this by some religious figures. But in its defensiveness, religion has

[12] For a more comprehensive discussion of the differentiation approach in science and religion, see Meyer, "The Demarcation of Science and Religion."

concomitantly created an enemy out of the community of science.[13]

The tension in these areas may be exemplified in the following issues: Scientism, Logical Positivism, and Reductionism; Creationism and Darwinism; and Divine Providence and Naturalism.

Scientism is the assertion that scientific knowledge makes God and religious faith superfluous. It depends on the presumption that science has the sole authority in explaining reality. Resulting from this worldview is Logical Positivism which presupposes that beyond scientific knowledge, that is factual, nothing else can be known. Therefore, science possesses the complete explanation of reality. Other non-scientific sources of truth, like religion or philosophy, must be abandoned and discarded. This, consequently, leads to epistemic reductionism which limits the whole of reality into scientific knowledge.[14] This trinity of scientific fundamentalism: scientism, logical positivism, and reductionism perfectly exemplifies the epistemological and methodological tensions between science and religion. In terms of epistemology, they reduce reality into what is empirically verifiable by scientific investigation. This is solidly conjoined with the methodological tension. If reality is reduced to what can only be known by scientific investigation, then the only valid means (method) for inquiring about reality is the scientific method. This then results to the discarding of metaphysics, art, morality, and religion because they all recognize an ontological reality (epistemological tension) beyond what can be empirically verified by scientific investigation (methodological tension).

The next example is the debate between Creationism and Evolutionism. Creationism, also known as "creation

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[13] Russel, "The Conflict of Science and Religion," pp. 12-14.

[14] Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," pp. 5-4–5-5.

science," originates from a fundamentalist treatment of biblical authority. It believes that the biblical truth belongs to the same domain as the scientific truth. It insists on a literal understanding of creation based on the book of Genesis. Its theological commitment in relation to creation may be characterized as follows: belief in *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing); belief that mutation and natural selection are insufficient to explain evolution; belief that existing species are stable and therefore one could not have evolved from another; belief that humans and apes come from different ancestry; belief that certain geological formations can be explained by catastrophism in the bible, e.g. Noah's Ark story; and belief that the earth is about six to ten years old only.[15] At the opposite end of the spectrum is Darwinism which is a philosophical worldview, rather than scientific, that emerges from the evolution theory. It acknowledges that new species emerged by means of natural selection and chance survival of the fittest. Darwinism is a different conception of the theory of evolution which was espoused beforehand by Lamarck and de Saint-Hilaire. The theory of evolution is not contrary to a theistic and religious worldview while Darwinism is more inclined to an atheistic and materialistic view of reality.[16] Although the two, Creationism and Darwinism, are extreme views in understanding the origin and development of life on earth, they both perpetuate the science and faith

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[15] See Ted Peters, "Science and Theology: Toward Consonance," 15-16. GS 36 reminds us: "Consequently, we cannot but deplore certain habits of mind, which are sometimes found too among Christians, which do not sufficiently attend to the rightful independence of science and which, from the arguments and controversies they spark, lead many minds to conclude that faith and science are mutually opposed."

[16] See http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05654a.htm; see also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darwinism.

conflict thesis. On one hand, Creationism, as a form of fundamentalism, leads to a general presumption that all adherents of religion have an incompatible worldview with science, i.e. if one believes in the bible they do not believe in evolution. On the other hand, this may also lead to a counter-defensive posture on the part of the people of religion against scientific discoveries. For example, the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest was perceived as a threat to the prevailing ethical norm that religion advocates.

The last example is the issue regarding divine providence vis-à-vis naturalism. The latter asserts that the material universe is all that there is. It is a form of reductionism which limits reality to what is physical, material, and natural.[17] It thus implicates an atheistic worldview that discards any metaphysical and transcendent reality, causality, and operations in the cosmos. This thereby undermines the theistic notion of divine providence. If matter is all of reality, then there is no need for God and God cannot be an efficacious causal agent in the world. Naturalism may be used as an example for all of the above-mentioned areas of contention. Epistemologically speaking, naturalism is ontologically deficient because it reduces reality to what is material although reality includes non-materiality, e.g. causality of events. Methodologically, it leads to empiricism since it equates what is real with what can only be observed by the senses. Ethically, it leads to a disregard of the laws of morality which are non-material realities and are based on religious convictions that are metaphysically grounded. At this point, the focus will be on how naturalism causes contention in social powers. Social and political naturalism asserts that in order to secure the interest and progress of society, the

[17] See http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10713a.htm.

constitution and government must disregard religion.[18] Therefore, naturalism undermines not only the recognition of divine providence in the life of believers but also religion altogether. It undermines the legitimate role of faith and religion in the public sphere.

Despite these apparent areas of conflict between science and religion, serious historical scholarship reveals that the conflict thesis is mere oversimplification and, at worst, a deception.[19] The following reasons summarize why it could be argued as such. First, the conflict thesis undermines the rich and complex relationships between science and religion. Second, it disregards the several documented instances where science and religion worked as allies. Third, it purports a mistaken view of history where progress is deemed expected. Fourth, it obfuscates the vast spectrum of ideas in both science and religion. Fifth, it provokes a distorted understanding of the disputes stemming from other factors aside from the contention between science and religion. Finally, it exaggerates minor disputes or even simple variety of opinions to the status of major conflicts.[20] If these reasons were able to shed light on the aforementioned contentions, how then should science and faith/religion relate with each other?

Approaches of Relating Science and Faith

There are several ways on how science and faith can relate with each other. In this section, a summary of these approaches will be rendered by going through four main positions: the fusion model, the contrast model, the dialogue model, and the integration model.

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[18] See http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10713a.htm.
[19] Russel, "The Conflict of Science and Religion," p. 16.
[20] Ibid., pp. 14-16.

The fusion model is based on New Age spirituality that avoids certain dichotomies like physical (scientific) and spiritual, knowledge and emotions, humanity and nature, etc. It seeks to cultivate consciousness of the intrinsic unity and wholeness of the cosmos.[21] Thus, it collapses the proper boundaries and differentiations between science and faith. It does not acknowledge the distinction of its methodologies and epistemologies. While there are many good things to be said about the holistic view of New Age spirituality, e.g. the cultivation of human imaginative faculty and its strong ecological thrust, it still remains to be a problematic stance because it fuses science and faith into one without regard of their distinctions. A good example of adherents of this view are the scientologists.[22]

The second position may be called the contrast model. This model recognizes the distinction between and separation of science and faith in terms of methods, languages and domains. It presupposes that the two provide distinct answers to the same questions because of these differences. In terms of method, science uses an empirical and experimental investigation of events and it deals with objective facts. Through the experimental method, which is a closed system, its study can be repeatable and predictable. Meanwhile, religion deals with Divine revelation and subjective experiences. Therefore, science and religion have distinct views of reality. But this does not necessarily mean they are in conflict with each other. In terms of language, science is more prosaic, literal, and technical while religion uses the language of allegories, metaphors, and symbolisms. And, in terms of domains, science inquires about nature

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[21] Peters, "Science and Theology: Toward Consonance," pp. 20-21.

[22] See http://www.scientology.org/what-is-scientology.html#slide2.

and the physical and finite realities, whereas religion is concerned about God, the infinite, and the spiritual realities.[23] To reiterate, the differentiation between science and faith in terms of method, language, and domain does not necessarily mean that the two are in contrast with each other but simply that they are distinct and autonomous. As cited earlier, this position is already being advocated by the Roman Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council, specifically in the document called *Gaudium et spes*.[24]

The third position may be called the dialogue model. Here, science and faith are perceived as two distinct fields of knowledge that provide complementary answers to the same inquiry. The two dialogue in order to arrive to that one truth, the common truth. The two are like two sides of the same coin of truth.[25] This is similar to what Peters calls as Hypothetical Consonance that indicates "a correspondence between what can be said scientifically about the natural world and what the theologian understands to be God's creation."[26] This does not mean a fusion of faith and science but rather a dialogue and mutual interaction in their inquiry about the truth. These two remain to be differentiated and yet not totally isolated from each other. Thus, the relationship of these two is not adversarial but rather mutual and complementary. Religion provides pre-scientific presuppositions that are necessary for scientific investigation, e.g. metaphysical certainty of reality and our capacity to know it, etc., while scientific studies lead to non-scientific questions, e.g. questions on purpose, ethical questions, etc.[27]

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[23] Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," p. 5-9.
[24] See GS 36.
[25] Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," p. 5-9.
[26] Peters, "Science and Theology: Toward Consonance," p. 18.
[27] Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," pp. 5-9–5-10.

Lastly, the fourth position may be called the integration model. It seeks to integrate science and faith, without fusion, in order that science may enrich faith. Through integration, new scientific discoveries will be able to facilitate a better understanding of the faith. For instance, there are attempts to develop a theology of nature, a doctrine of creation in view of modern science. Also, there are the contemporary issues such as quantum uncertainty and chaos theory that posts inquiry about God's action in the world.[28] For the theologian John Haught, the integration model provides scientific confirmation about the belief in the creator God. However, he warns both scientists and theologians alike to be careful not to encroach faith with science. In other words, the two cannot be merged together just like what the fusion model proposes. The confirmation of theological truths by scientific data does not mean a provision of scientific data of religion as an alternative source for scientific hypothesis.[29] The theology of nature, as espoused by John Haught, serves as a good example for this faith-science relation model.[30]

Science and Faith Dialogue and Integration

This paper began with an observation of the prevailing misconception of conflict between science and faith/religion. A lot of people misconstrue that the two are incompatible with each other and that one can only be a believer of science or religion. To believe in science means to be evidence-based while to believe in religion means to believe without or even in spite of evidence. In the section on the origin of faith-science conflict, the

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[28] Day, "Ways of Relating Science and Faith," p. 5-10.

[29] John Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), p. 23.

[30] See John Haught, *Christianity and Science: Toward a Theology of Nature* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), pp. 47-48.

development of this proposition was traced from the scientific revolution instigated by the Age of Enlightenment. Although the proponents of modern science did not intend to disqualify the rightful place of religion in public discourse and as a legitimate form of knowledge, it still gave way to an erroneous conception that faith and science are in rivalry with each other. The commonly cited illustrations for this are the cases of Galileo and Darwin. This notion is further complicated by a defensive reaction on the part of religion as it feels being threatened by modern science. The promulgation of the dogma of Papal infallibility in the nineteenth century was perceived as a move to defend ecclesiastical authority against the expansion of scientific discoveries. This led to a retaliation on the part of some members of the scientific community, like Draper and White, who then adopted the science-faith conflict thesis. From then on, there were a lot of literature and people who cater to this misconception despite being criticized and clarified by more recent reputable studies. The truth remains to be that faith and science are not in opposition to each other. The apparent contentions in epistemology, methodology, ethics, and social powers are overrated and they often stem from a misunderstanding of the complex relationship of the two and other valid factors surrounding it. There are actually several ways on how faith and science can relate with each other. In this paper, four models were identified, namely the fusion, contrast, dialogue, and integration. The models describe how faith and science may be treated as merging truths (fusion model), independent truths (contrast model), complementary truths (dialogue model), or correlative truths (integration model).

I do not agree with the science-faith conflict thesis nor the science-faith fusion model. Instead, I propose a balanced and carefully nuanced view by adopting the

last three models. I recognize the independence, complementarity, and correlation of truth in both religious and scientific senses.

The science-faith conflict thesis as explained earlier stems from numerous misconceptions about the two. I do not believe in a scientistic, naturalistic, positivistic, and reductionistic worldview which states that reality (ontology) is limited to what can be empirically investigated (epistemological-methodological reductionism) by the sciences. Reality is more than what can be empirically verified. There are actual events or phenomena that are beyond the observation of human senses and yet they are real. And the efficient causes of these events, despite the fact that the object of empirical verification is only their effects, are nonetheless truly real although they belong to a different domain of reality. For example, if in a far away galaxy there is a star that explodes right now, it is reasonable to claim that this phenomenon is real even though at the moment that the event happened no one has directly observed it. Empirical verification is not the only basis for asserting the reality of events. Furthermore, the mechanisms that cause the star to explode are also as real as the star itself. Therefore, it could be reasonably argued that reality is more than what is empirically verifiable through the scientific method.

To acknowledge metaphysical reality gives a reasonable ground for religious/faith knowledge which is not necessarily in competition with scientific knowledge. There must be a fair recognition of the scope and boundaries of religious and scientific investigations. In other words, there has to be no con-fusion between what is scientific and what is faith knowledge. For instance, Galileo once said, "The Bible shows the way to go to

heaven, not the way the heavens go."[31] It is science's role to explain how the heavens go. Thus, the two ought not to have contending explanations on the same matter. There has to be a delineation of the distinct levels of their explanations of things. I side with Vatican II in recognizing the relative autonomy of the scientific disciplines, both natural and social.[32] On one hand, this avoids ecclesiastical authoritarianism and, on the other hand, this keeps a healthy relationship between the sciences and religion. If their relative autonomy is respected by religion, then it is unlikely that they would defensively insist on the incompatibility stance. The delineation of the two as differentiated yet interrelated fields of investigation acknowledges their respective epistemologies, methodologies, and roles in ethics and socio-politics. Thus, no collapse of the two should be done but rather their interaction and interdisciplinarity must be encouraged.

Faith and science though differentiated are not absolutely alien from each other. They are dealing with the same realities although from different angles or domains. Science deals with the physical and natural explanation of reality while religion deals with the spiritual and transcendent. Nonetheless, the two are complementary with each other. Science offers to explain the what and how, while religion offers to explain the why. The differentiated answers complement each other. Science explains the origins of the universe through the Big Bang theory (cosmological-how), while faith explains it through its religious narratives (teleological-why). Science and religion have to dialogue with each other in order to arrive to a more holistic and integrated view of reality. Otherwise, one

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[31] http://www.faradayschools.com/re-topics/re-year-12-13/galileo-and-how-he-understood-the-bible/.

[32] See, GS 36.

will fall back once more to the errors of scientific naturalism (e.g. Darwinism) or religious fundamentalism (e.g. Creationism). As the two enter into dialogue, they mutually enrich each other. Science has to take into account that it cannot intelligibly operate without the religiously influenced pre-scientific presuppositions like the intelligibility of creation, the human capacity for and the reasonability of pursuing the truth, the stability and order of natural laws, etc. On the other hand, religion has to learn from the sciences the scientific truths about this world that is created by God. It can lead to further enhancement of how religion understands and appreciate the beauty, truth, and goodness of God's creation. It can also be translated into concrete ethical actions of believers as they relate with nature and with their society in correspondence to what the natural and social sciences have to offer. Furthermore, religion can also maximize the developments and progress not only in scientific knowledge but also in technology in pursuing its advocacies. A good example for this is the recent encyclical of Pope Francis entitled, *Laudato Si*.[33] In the said encyclical, the pope incorporates data from the natural and the social sciences to support his ecological claim that is by its fundamental nature a religious cause. And yet here the Roman Pontiff was able to show how it is also integral to social, political, and ethical causes. To do this, it was not necessary to fuse science and faith. And obviously, the pope does not take the science-faith conflict position either. What the pope did was to allow faith to dialogue with the various scientific disciplines, while recognizing their rightful autonomy,

[33] See, Pope Francis, *Laudato Si,* May 24, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

in order to come up with a more holistic view of the issue and an integrated approach in addressing it.

Conclusion

How, then, can the preceding discussion be utilized in addressing the prevailing faith and science conflict myth? This problem is such a complex one. It is probably due to ignorance on the part of some people about the real issues surrounding the alleged contention or simply it is out of their lack of sincere investigation on it. However, this is just one possibility. It could also be surmised, that there are those who perpetuate this myth not out of intellectual impetus but out of their psycho-emotional reasons. Some of them might have issues with authority, particularly religious authority (cf. Draper). Some were probably coming from a bad experience with religion. Or others could be out of their good intention to counter religious fundamentalism (cf. White). However, to espouse the faith-science incompatibility myth with an uncritical lens is simply irresponsible and academically fallacious. It is therefore the duty of both people of the sciences and of the faith, given their academic disciplines, to counter this misunderstanding and present a more reliable and academically sound conception of the proper relationship between faith and science. Perhaps, this will be much more appreciated by Bishop Barron who, understandably, gave the greater burden of clarification to his colleagues in the Church.