

# **How A Scientist's Faith Can Revolutionize His or Her Scientific Research**

by Dr. Jay L. Wile

## Qualifications

- College Professor (former and current)
- Helped Develop Indiana's Only Residential High School for Gifted and Talented Students
- NSF-Sponsored Scientist with More Than \$200,000 In Research Grants
- Became Interested in Homeschooling Because of Excellent University Students Who Were Homeschooled
- Currently writes homeschooling and Christian apologetics materials for Berean Builders Publishing

## **There Are Those Who Say That Science and Christianity are Incompatible**

“It follows that science is incompatible with religion. Why is this? It is because once you attribute any particular event to a supernatural agent, a proposition that cannot be disproven by observation or experiment, then science becomes both irrelevant and impossible.” - Dr. John Ellis

“Science and religion are incompatible in the same sense that the serious pursuit of knowledge about reality is incompatible with [nonsense].... Religion makes smart people do stupid things, and scientists do not like stupid.” - Dr. PZ Myers

This idea demonstrates a shocking ignorance of science history and the works of many modern scientists.

Many scientists of the past actively used their faith in their scientific research, and it produced incredible results.

Some scientists today do that, and once again, it produces incredible results.

I see at least four different ways a scientist can use his or her faith to augment scientific research.

### **1. Pray for Guidance**

Roger Bacon, the father of the scientific method, put it this way:

“For the grace of faith illuminates greatly, as also do divine inspirations, not only in things spiritual, but in things corporeal and in the sciences of philosophy...”

**James Clerk Maxwell, the father of electromagnetism, regularly prayed for the Lord to guide his scientific research. One of his prayers that was preserved:**

“Almighty God, Who hast created man in Thine own image, and made him a living soul that he might seek after Thee, and have dominion over Thy creatures, teach us to study the works of Thy hands, that we may subdue the earth to our use, and strengthen the reason for Thy service; so to receive Thy blessed Word, that we may believe in Him Whom Thou hast sent, to give us the knowledge of salvation and the remission of our sins. All of which we ask in the name of the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

**Notice his emphasis:**

- He wants God to teach him to study nature
- He wants to follow the Bible’s command to have dominion over the earth
- Ultimately for the knowledge of Salvation

**Dr. James Tour (one of the world’s most accomplished synthetic chemists) follows Maxwell’s example.**

“As a scientist, when posed with scientific mysteries that have presented themselves in my research, I have so often bowed my heart and prayed, ‘Lord, make your light shine on this darkness. When no others can see, please Lord, let me see.’ On many occasions, when graduate students have brought their puzzling laboratory results and laid them on my desk, I have been as baffled as they. So remembering [Psalm 112:4], which I had long before committed to memory, I pray for light, and God answers. Surely, meditating on God’s word can cause light to arise in darkness even for the challenges that confront our secular careers.”

**2. See The Lord in His Creation**

**Johannes Kepler** determined the planets’ orbits are ellipses.

“For in the sphere, which is the image of God the Creator and the Archetype of the world-as was proved in Book 1-there are three regions, symbols of the three persons of the Holy Trinity – the center, a symbol of the Father; the surface, of the Son; and the intermediate space, of the Holy Ghost.”

Kepler published his first two laws of planetary motion in 1609, 8 years after getting all of Tycho Brahe’s observations of the planets.

It took 10 more years to publish his third law, which gave the first mathematical relationship between a planet’s orbital period and its distance from the sun.

Would he have looked at Brahe’s data for 18 years had he not seen the image of God in the universe?

## **Carolus Linnaeus**

“I saw the infinite, all-knowing and all-powerful God from behind...I followed His footsteps over nature’s fields and saw everywhere an eternal wisdom and power, an inscrutable perfection.”

His classification system brought order to the chaotic mess of biological observations, because he knew that God makes order out of Chaos.

## **Henry F. Schaefer, III**

Is the Graham Perdue Professor of Chemistry and the director of the Center for Computational Quantum Chemistry at the University of Georgia. He has revolutionized our ideas on how atoms work together to form molecules.

He has more than 750 scientific publications to his credit. It is not surprising, then, that he is the second most quoted chemist in the world.

He Sees God in Every Advance He Makes

“The significance and joy in my science comes in the occasional moments of discovering something new and saying to myself, 'So that's how God did it!' My goal is to understand a little corner of God's plan.”

That last sentence is, in my mind, the best description of science. Only a scientist who sees God in what is being studied can take it to heart.

### **3. Think About What You Expect from a Created Universe**

**Nicolaus Copernicus** put the sun at the center of the universe specifically because the geocentric model was too messy, and he said that this went against the nature of God, who is the “the Best and Most Orderly Workman”

## **Sir Isaac Newton**

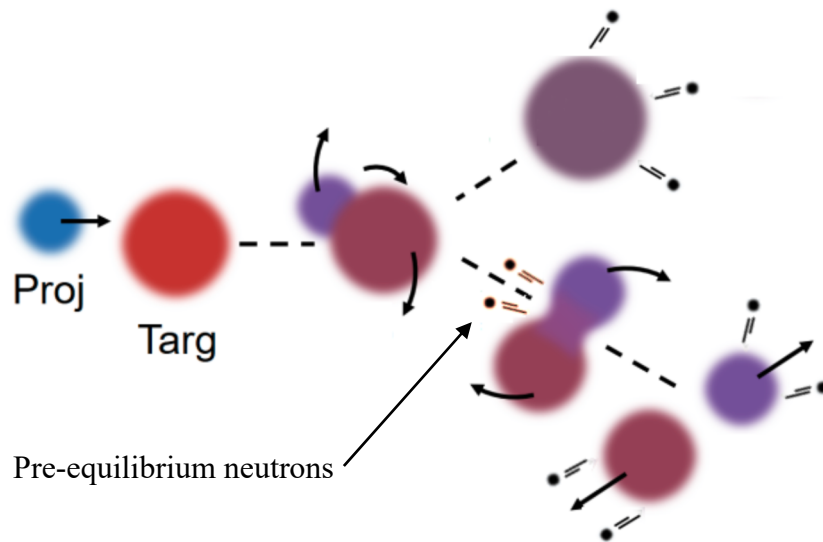
“This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being. This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all.”

This caused him to reject the scientific consensus of the day and take what he learned on earth and apply it to the planets.

Dr. Morris Kline on Newton and His Followers:

“The thought that all the phenomena of motion should follow from one set of principles might seem grandiose and inordinate, but it occurred very naturally to the religious mathematicians of the 17th century. God had designed the universe, and it was to be expected that all phenomena of nature would follow one master plan. One mind designing a universe would almost surely have employed one set of basic principles to govern related phenomena.”

### **I Will Use Myself Here, Even Though I am Definitely NOT a Great Scientist**



Those neutrons were always treated like they were independent particles, but I thought the nucleus would be better designed than that, and it would hold onto its particles better.

After praying for guidance, I came upon a method of analyzing the data to see if pre-equilibrium neutrons really acted independently.

My results indicated they did not, which led to a concept that is now called “Radial Energy Scaling.”

While very minor, it was my most important contribution to nuclear chemistry.

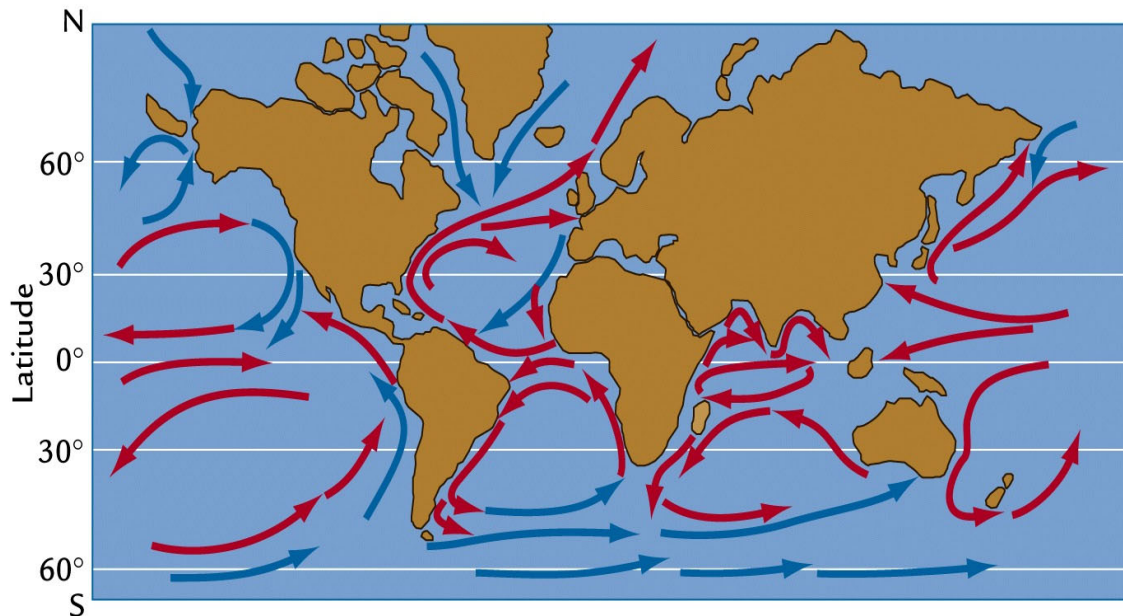
## **4. Use the Bible for Inspiration**

**Matthew F. Maury** was an officer in the Navy. After an injury, he devoted himself to studying the sea and navigation. He published *The Physical Geography of the Sea*, which was the first comprehensive book on oceanography.

He Became Very Interested in Psalm 8

“...once when Maury was ill he had his son read the Bible to him each night. One night he read the eighth Psalm, and when he came to the passage — ‘The fishes of the sea and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea’ — Maury had him read it over several times. Finally he said, ‘If God says there are paths in the sea I am going to find them if I get out of this bed.’”

### He Found the PATHS OF THE SEAS



Especially wind-driven ships, but even modern ships, travel much faster if they follow these paths!

This monument to Maury was put in Goshen Pass, VA by the state of Virginia with the help of the U.S. Navy.

"Matthew Fontaine Maury, Pathfinder of the Seas, the Genius Who First Snatched from the Ocean and Atmosphere the Secret of Their Laws...His Inspiration, Holy Writ, Psalms 8 & 107, Verses 3, 23 & 24, Ecclesiastes Chap 1, Verse 6. A Tribute By His Native State."

**-Dr. Whitmore at Cedarville** is using his interpretation of the Bible's description of the worldwide Flood to revolutionize geology.

**-Dr. Russel Humphreys** has the only theory of planetary magnetic fields that is consistent with the data and has made verified predictions. He used 2Peter 3:5 as inspiration.

**-Young-earth creationists** have used their interpretation of the age of the earth to find carbon-14 in dinosaur fossils.