

Across the Cosmos July 2026: Co-Creating a Thriving Future

I'm removing my affiliations from this month's column, since the opinions I'm voicing here are my own and do not reflect the views of any particular institution or organization.

The title of my column this month is taken from the theme of this year's [Institute on Religion in an Age of Science](#) Conference on Star Island, which I attended remotely. The late Lutheran theologian [Phil Hefner](#) developed the idea of humans as 'Created Co-Creators' over the course of his career and work in science and religion. I first met Phil shortly after I moved to Chicagoland with my family in 1998. I had many discussions with him over the course of the subsequent years of his life. Although we came from the same religious tradition, and Phil's knowledge of science was impressive (to say the least), it was initially difficult for each of us to understand the other, since I spoke the language of science and Phil spoke the language of theology. It took time, but it was well-worth the effort!

Science and religion are two of the most powerful forces shaping our world today. The exciting field of science and religion has flourished over the past few decades because of the scientists, theologians, philosophers, and ethicists who have come together to share ideas and have tried to understand, and learn from, each other. The phrase "Creative Mutual Interaction," first coined by [Robert John Russell](#), and frequently used by CLP member, [Ted Peters](#), summarizes these efforts adeptly. The individuals involved in these discussions are as diverse as the perspectives shared. There is at least as much disagreement as there is agreement. Most of us, I think, would consider this healthy, since this is how we learn about experiences and perspectives that differ from our own, and how we build bridges across different communities.

We are now living in a time when this bridge-building is under threat by those who would tell us that the only perspective that matters is one that aligns 100% with a specific political and ideological agenda. The last time I visited the proposed [Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance](#) there were just under 80,000 commentators. Although this may seem like a lot, I fervently hope that in the remaining time for comments (until July 13th), this number expands considerably! There is a lot at stake here – including the free and unencumbered exchange of ideas that have allowed both the sciences and the humanities to flourish and contribute to a thriving future.

Until next month,

Grace

gwolfchase@gmail.com