

Science as the Voice of God

On Earth Day, April 22, people all over the country participated in science marches to honor the vast contribution of science to our world, and to emphasize the importance of scientific research in equipping us to ensure a sustainable future. As people of faith, we marched – not despite our faith, but because of it.

“SCIENCE IS A PATH TO GOD,” proclaimed the reader board at Admiral Congregational UCC the week of the March. From glimpses of our intricate biology seen through a microscope to the glorious cosmic displays of light and beauty revealed by the Hubble Telescope, many of us are indeed reimagining our relationship to all of life. We are confronted anew with the question of what it means to be human, part of a vast ecosystem of life, while at the same time brought to tears and amazement by the wonder of it all.

Our United Church of Christ denomination embraces the challenge that science and technology present to traditional theology. God is a living God, calling us to expand our hearts, souls and minds. One way we see to do that is to listen to what God is saying. “God is Still Speaking,” we say. To be true to that slogan, we must ask ourselves: Are we listening? And what does it look like to listen to God?

God speaks in many different voices, in many different ways. Experience, tradition, scripture and reason have, for centuries, been modes in which people have heard God and come to faith as they wrestled with the mystery of life. Faith is a living response to life and for life.

In the last few decades many people, religious and not, have discovered that God is speaking through science, and a brand new dialogue is emerging between faith and science. Each domain has an important contribution. Like the loyal churchman, Galileo, said, *The bible shows the way to heaven, not the way the heavens go*. Science provides a language for listening to nature. It reveals worlds of astonishing interconnectivity and complexity. Exploration of creation through scientific inquiry is an exploration of God. Science is a powerful voice of God.

After Mt St Helens erupted in 1980, scientists were amazed at how quickly the decimated landscape recovered. They were surprised at how interconnected and complex the biosystems were. Human beings have everything to gain from contemplating this reality. Our survival now depends on us seeing and appreciating how interconnected our global systems are, and how our political, economic and cultural systems are destroying the fragile ecosystem of our planet. And we must work together to act on what we see.

We appreciate how science gives voice to the natural world, how it helps us make sense of the world’s workings. And we want to listen, ever more closely, to what God is saying through the environment and all its creatures. So! People of faith marched in the Science March. We were expressing our appreciation for the scientific method and its findings, and building partnership for serving and preserving life on the planet.

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With input from Rev Meighan Pritchard and Rev Andrew Conley-Holcom

For more background, see http://www.ucc.org/not-mutually-exclusive_index and click on "A New Voice Arising: A Pastoral Letter on Faith Engaging Science and Technology," 2008