

*The Relation of Science and Religion*

Religion is at an all-time low in today's society. At least that's what is claimed by many, as science continues to answer more and more questions through "logic," rather than "hope." However, is this really true? Is science and religion really so different from one another? After observing what he had to say, I feel Physics Professor Christopher Search of Stevens Institute of Technology would argue these two concepts are perhaps more like distant relatives, and less like polar opposites.

Who is Christopher Search, besides a Physics professor? He is a man driven by curiosity and a desire to answer the unanswered. Someone with an open mind to what may explain certain phenomena, but not necessarily to concepts that become trapped in their own redundancy.

Search began his journey in science and Physics from being around his father a lot while growing up, where he was exposed to both religious and scientific ideas. His father studied theology, and also had a PhD in Psychology. Thus he got a taste of each field, and as he got older, he turned to Physics for answers.

As a young teenager, he went through an atheist faze despite being raised Catholic. He viewed Physics as a religion, since it would give reasoning and justification to questions that were backed by math and experimentation, as opposed to strictly believing something without certainty.

His love for Physics was almost terminated after he was forced to take Mechanics in high school, but he continued to pursue a Physics Major in college, with an overarching fascination towards quantum theory and relativity, which he notes is the focus of nearly all modern Physics majors, joking about how they may as well rename the major to "Quantum Physics" exclusively.

Since his undergraduate years, his career paths have evolved. He is no longer purely obsessed with Quantum Physics and Relativity. Nowadays he is interested in more applied physics, such as pure optics research. Many quantum physics phenomena are relative to pure optics, and he decided to take what he was working on before (purely quantum) into this field. In fact, he started an optical engineering program at Stevens 2 years ago.

Even with as much experience in the field of science as he has, he does not dismiss religion. In the 2020 article "What's Wrong With Physics?," reporter John Horgan, of Scientific American, interviewed his thoughts on science, where he explained how "physics can't explain why the universe exists or why we are even here." This is not to say he doesn't see Physics as the go-to for answers, but when it comes to the idea of religion, he likes to compare religion and Physics, rather than choosing one over the other.

To elaborate on this, he discusses how he views Quantum Mechanics as a “cocktail party conversation” for this exact reason, talking about how “there is one part of Quantum Mechanics involving precise math and machinery to calculate phenomena, and another where we try and figure out how we perceive this phenomena. The philosophical interpretations don’t really get us anywhere, as it’s all about how we interpret the same math, rather than making any realistic predictions.” As a result, it seems more like religion at this point.