**BELIEVING IN JESUS**

**and the Human Genome**

*Francis Collins*

I am a scientist and a believer, and I find no conflict between those world views.

As the director of the Human Genome Project, I have led a consortium of scientists to read out the 3.1 billion letters of the human genome, our own DNA instruction book. As a believer, I see DNA, the information molecule of all living things, as God’s language, and the elegance and complexity of our own bodies and the rest of nature as a reflection of God’s plan.

I did not always embrace these perspectives. As a graduate student in physical chemistry in the 1970s, I was an atheist, finding no reason to postulate the existence of any truths outside of mathematics, physics and chemistry. But then I went to medical school, and encountered life and death issues at the bedsides of my patients. Challenged by one of those patients, who asked “What do you believe, Doctor?”, I began searching for answers.

I had to admit that the science I loved so much was powerless to answer questions such as “What is the meaning of life?” “Why am I here?” “Why does mathematics work, anyway?” “If the universe had a beginning, who created it?” “Why are the physical constants in the universe so finely tuned to allow the possibility of complex life forms?” “Why do humans have a moral sense?” “What happens after we die?”

I had always assumed that faith was based on purely emotional and irrational arguments, and was astounded to discover, initially in the writings of the Oxford scholar C.S. Lewis and subsequently from many other sources, that one could build a very strong case for the plausibility of the existence of God on purely rational grounds. My earlier atheist’s assertion that “I know there is no God” emerged as the least defensible. As the British writer G.K. Chesterton famously remarked, “Atheism is the most daring of all dogmas, for it is the assertion of a universal negative.”

But reason alone cannot prove the existence of God. Faith is reason plus revelation, and the revelation part requires one to think with the spirit as well as with the mind. You have to hear the music, not just read the notes on the page. Ultimately, a leap of faith is required.

For me, that leap came in my 27th year, after a search to learn more about God’s character led me to the person of Jesus Christ. Here was a person with remarkably strong historical evidence of his life, who made astounding statements about loving your neighbour, and whose claims about being God’s Son seemed to demand a decision about whether he was deluded or the real thing. After resisting for nearly two years, I found it impossible to go on living in such a state of uncertainty, and I became a follower of Jesus….

I have found there is a wonderful harmony in the complementary truths of science and faith. The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. God can be found in the cathedral and in the laboratory. By investigating God’s majestic and awesome creation, science can actually be a means of worship.

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