

GOD IN THE LAB: How science enhances faith

Ruth Bancewicz

For former biologist Dr Ruth Bancewicz, experiencing scientific research first hand brings a sense of awe that enhances faith. As a communicator of science and Christianity over the last ten years, she has encountered many others who have similar stories to tell. This book is a distillation of that experience, and an exploration of the common ground that exists between science and faith.

Chapter 1: The Theologian and the Telescope. Introduces the idea that science can both enhance Christian faith and raise spiritual questions for non-Christian scientists. Includes the story of a theologian who rediscovered his love for science.

Chapter 2: Science. Explains the reality of life in the lab, including the fun parts. Science is a dynamic process and not a static collection of facts. Includes stories from Dr Harvey McMahon, a senior scientist at the prestigious MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge.

Chapter 3: Christianity. Briefly describes what Christianity is, and why the author is a Christian. Explains why Christianity and science are compatible, including evidence for God, the history of science and Christianity, and the limits of science.

Chapter 4: Creativity. Describes where creativity comes from, and what helps it to flourish. Asks, how is science creative? Does the Bible have anything to say about creativity? How can a scientist who is a Christian live creatively in both their faith and their science? Includes contributions from Dr Ruth Hogg, lecturer in vision science, Queens University Belfast.

Chapter 5: Imagination. What is imagination, and how is it important in science or theology? Imagination helps us to make sense of the world. With contributions from Dr Jennifer Siggers, senior lecturer in bioengineering, Imperial College.

Chapter 6: Beauty. How do scientists experience beauty? Does theology help us to appreciate beauty? What does the beauty of creation show us about the character of God? Including Professor Jeff Hardin, a zoologist at the University of Madison-Wisconsin, who explains how the beauty he sees in the lab helps his faith to flourish.

Chapter 7: Wonder. Cultivating wonder. Wonder is a stimulus to scientific exploration, but does knowledge banish wonder? Case studies show that the answer is 'definitely not'. Is wonder also important in theology? We also meet Dr Rhoda Hawkins, a theoretical physicist and lecturer at Sheffield University, who explains how wonder drives her science and theology.

Chapter 8: Awe. Awe is a universal experience. In science, awe leads to questions about the deeper meaning of our observations. For some, awe leads to spiritual questions, or to God. For Christians, awe leads to worship. Dr Bob Sluka, a marine biologist working in Kenya, shares his stories of awe and faith.

Chapter 9: Spirituality. Brief epilogue drawing on the themes addressed throughout the book, ending with a reflection on the experience of beauty and awe in science and how that can point to questions of God.