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as prudence can take place even when the subject is not conscious of such cultivation. The tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon provides for Svob an analogy for our dependence on God. Just as we find ourselves helpless when facing the inability to recall a forgotten name and thus must wait upon some external aid, so too we find ourselves helpless in discovering God and so must wait passively upon God's help. Similarly, Svob suggests that as human cognition reaches a limit of self-definition, it may thereby find itself wholly dependent upon God: "to will consistently to live in the truth requires the grace of God" (p. 87). In short, Svob's chapter is peppered with fruitful insights into how the life of the mind in relation to its natural objects provides ample analogies for the life of the mind that has God as its supernatural object.

In the sixth chapter, Emily Burdett approaches divine providence from the perspective of developmental psychology, pointing out that despite millennia of writing on divine providence little attention has been given to how individuals develop their understanding of God's action and providence. Burdett's method is to examine how children develop their understanding of God's involvement in the world, finding that from an early age children conceive of God as engaged in the world in active, responsive, and (possibly) benevolent ways. This research suggests to Burdett the existence of an intuitive notion of divine providence among humans that God should act benevolently in the world. By measuring the time infants look at different animate and inanimate objects, psychologists have been able to verify that infants are able to distinguish between agents and non-agents and can grasp the existence of intention motivating observed acts. By the time the child is 3–5 years of age, they can distinguish between ordinary agents (e.g., a parent) and extraordinary agents (e.g., God). Burdett then shows how children distinguish between human and supernatural agency through reference to a fascinating set of studies on children and prayer, which finds that as children grow older, they tend to place greater restrictions on the types of prayers that are acceptable or answerable. Still further research confirms that children at a relatively young age can discern between human and supernatural agency, including Burdett's own research that children believe God can perform acts that they think impossible for humans. Burdett then describes how research has shown that infants and children are drawn to benevolent actors and are averse to malevolent ones, leading Burdett to hypothesize that children are likely to conceive of supernatural agents as benevolent. Burdett concludes with some intriguing suggestions for further research, outlining potential methodologies for testing the above hypothesis.

As is often the case in volumes that incorporate a wide variety of disciplinary approaches, the editors' promise of a cohesive argument—in this case, that human providence functions as an effective analogy of divine providence—is not entirely met. However, this is not a significant weakness of the volume, as many of the essays are in themselves helpful contributions to an understanding of divine providence. What stands out to this reviewer is that, regardless of disciplinary perspective, both the thought of Thomas Aquinas and the method of analogical understanding continue to be rich resources to mine in the development of our understanding of providence, human and divine.

*Reviewed by Scott Halse, Lecturer in philosophy and humanities at Vanier College, Montreal, QC H4L 3X9.*

## GENERAL SCIENCE

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**NAVIGATING FAITH AND SCIENCE** by Joseph Vukov. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2022. 179 pages. Paperback; \$19.99. ISBN: 9780802879615.

Joseph Vukov, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University Chicago, takes on the relationship between sciences and Christian faith in his engaging book *Navigating Faith and Science*. Written for a popular audience, Vukov discusses three models for the sciences-faith relationship: conflict, independence, and dialogue.

Ongoing conversation always takes place in the context of a relationship, and I like to think of the sciences-faith relationship as such an ongoing conversation. Conversation in any relationship can be challenging. Similarly for the sciences-faith relationship. Human conversations are dynamic, full of surprising twists and turns, frustrations, joys, and pains. Similarly for conversations among sciences and faith.

Intellectual arrogance negatively affects sciences-faith conversations. Vukov's helpful starting point in chapter 1 frames intellectual humility as crucial to navigating the sciences-faith relationship. He argues that intellectual humility involves "a cognitive aspect (accurate self-assessment), an emotional aspect (not being caught up in one's own desire to be right), and most importantly, a purposeful aspect (aiming at the truth)" (p. 15). Vukov has insightful things to say about intellectual humility as a human virtue reflecting appropriate appraisal (Rom. 12:3) of our finitude. He rightly points out that a confident faithful Christian "is not intellectually arrogant," but trusts deeply in God's promises and wisdom (p. 25). How does this help with

the sciences-faith relationship? Practicing intellectual humility avoids intellectual arrogance in the sciences-faith relationship.

Vukov discusses conflict in chapter 2, following Ian Barbour in christening a conflict model for the sciences-faith relationship. While Vukov identifies intellectual arrogance as an important source of conflict, this does not explain why conflicts arise. Conflict is possible only on concordance models for the relationship. A concordance model presupposes that along with whatever principles of biblical interpretation we adopt, we also demand that there necessarily must be a correspondence or implication between scientific and faith statements. Think of a jigsaw puzzle, in which scientific and faith statements contribute pieces to the puzzle but also function as constraints for what can fit into the puzzle.

For instance, modern young-Earth creationism presupposes that the statements of Genesis 1 constrain or correct any scientific statements about the age of the earth. In contrast, day-age interpretations presuppose a correlation between the days of Genesis 1 and geological ages. When one reads Genesis 1, assuming that its statements necessarily have correspondence to or implications for scientific statements, conflicts between the sciences and faith arise. The above statement explains why conflict models are concordance models. Concordance models almost always pitch a battle between taking sciences or faith as primary in setting the constraints on what goes into the puzzle. But this is a false forced choice. The concordance assumption demands we choose between what God reveals to us through the detailed study of his good creation and what God reveals to us through the study of scripture.

Vukov claims, "According to the Conflict Model, science and religion compete to answer the questions we have about ourselves and the world around us ... science and religion are (more or less) playing the same game" (p. 32). Although he never discusses it, this is the concordance assumption: there is only one puzzle, sciences and faith can contribute pieces to the puzzle, but only one of them can constrain what pieces are acceptable. Every example of conflict Vukov gives turns on interpretation of biblical texts and scientific research and the assumption of necessary concordance between the two.

Note that conflict is a form of relationship and a form of conversation. As the concordance assumption highlights, conflict conversations often take the form of "Our dialogue has to be on my terms, not yours!" or the incessant repetition of "Well, what about this piece

of the puzzle ...?" Are these productive relationships or good conversations carried out well among conversation partners? No.

Vukov is right that embracing intellectual humility leads to recognizing that all relationships involve incomplete, limited knowledge. In this context, conversation partners are not always open to hearing what the other has to say because they underestimate how incomplete their own knowledge is. Intellectual arrogance leads to stunted conversation: one partner assumes that faith is the best authority on all questions about the natural world while the other assumes the sciences are. As Vukov notes, both parties insist their approach is "right at all costs," and end up undermining "the pursuit of truth that guides both religion and science" (p. 51). Yet, this only happens because of the concordance assumption.

Maybe the best way to approach the sciences-faith relationship is dropping the concordance assumption. But there are better and worse ways of doing this. An example of the latter is the independence model (chap. 3), in which sciences and faith are separate, nonoverlapping domains. Independence models assume that sciences and faith contribute pieces to separate puzzles.

While Vukov's discussion of independence is helpful and engaging, to think that this model is not a form of sciences-faith conversation is too quick. Think of two people saying they will not talk due to irrelevance, lack of interest, or not seeing the point. Indeed, advocates of independence models cannot stop themselves from reiterating that there is no intersection, no relevance to any ongoing conversation between sciences and faith. Often, such advocates will repeat to each other they are both better off having no substantial conversation, repeating their reasons why (e.g., Michael Ruse).

A third way for understanding sciences-faith relationship is allowing that sometimes scientific and religious statements have an overlap. Nevertheless, we never force these connections; instead, we let them arise organically as we continue the work of exploring nature and plumbing the depths of faith. What do we do when overlap is found? We talk it through, hashing out the nature of the overlap and its meanings. This is Vukov's dialogue model (chap. 4). His emphasis on intellectual humility as a Christian virtue pays off most in this chapter because genuine conversation, in which we honestly seek to learn from each other and build relationship, is hard work! But it is necessary work if we are to honor Christ in the sciences-faith relationship aiming to exhibit how everything coheres in Christ (Col. 1:17). It is much easier to invoke the hubris of "I'm

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right; you have to agree with me” – concordance; or to tell each other, “Look, we’re better off if we stay out of each other’s hair” – independence.

These latter approaches assume that the sciences-faith relationship is fixed and settled once for all. Yet, like any human relationship, the sciences-faith relationship is always ongoing and dynamic, involving navigation and renegotiation. Try treating your relationship with your spouse or best friend as fixed and unchanging and see where that leads! The sciences-faith relationship cannot be healthy and growing unless we take the multiple perspectives involved seriously, as contributors to the ongoing conversation of how to do life together. *PSCF* readers interested in pursuing that adventure will be rewarded by a close reading of chapter 4 and its examples.

In chapter 5, Vukov attempts to show that we need the conflict, independence, and dialogue models to do different jobs at different times. But this leads to an incoherence in his discussion. I think taking the ideas of relationship and conversation more seriously could remedy the incoherence. For instance, Vukov critiques the dialogue model by pointing out that some proponents only have dialogue as a goal. But this is a failure to grasp that the sciences-faith conversation is always in service of learning more about each other and growing in how to get along as partners coming to understand God’s world. In a marriage, little gets accomplished if partners simply focus on dialogue for the sake of dialogue. Likewise, little gets accomplished if partners engage in conflict or independence. Understanding the relationship, when we can mutually help each other, when it is appropriate to encourage the other to “do your thing!,” and how to productively engage those times when we find ourselves in a conflict are all part of working out healthy ongoing relationship. Similarly for the sciences-faith relationship.

If sciences and faith are aiming at truth, as Vukov correctly argues, then the focus should be on developing the healthiest relationship enabling sciences and faith to pursue that aim. Arguing that the relationship is best modeled sometimes as conflict, sometimes as independence, or sometimes as dialogue, undercuts the aim for truth. A marriage or a family would not work well if partners are constantly shifting their relationships among these options. Instead, one always needs to understand how conflicts arise and how to address them within the ongoing relationship of a marriage. One always needs to understand what appropriate forms of independence are in the ongoing relationship of the family. And these understandings always need to take place in the context of humble, open conversation.

Good dialogue is central to any healthy human relationship. The same is true for the sciences-faith relationship.

*Reviewed by Robert C. Bishop, Department of Physics and Engineering, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187.*

## HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES OF SCIENCE

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**WHO TO TRUST? Christian Belief in Conspiracy Theories** by Nigel Chapman et al. Victoria, Australia: ISCAST, 2022. 164 pages. Paperback; \$12.99. ISBN: 9780645067156. ebook/discussion paper. <https://iscast.org/conspiracy/>.

Conspiracy theories (CTs) have existed for as long as humans have been able to record them for posterity; however, due to the exponential growth of electronic media, the proliferation and popularity of CTs have made them ubiquitous. Western societies have been particularly affected by CTs in recent decades through our ability to communicate unfiltered diatribes at the speed of light, by the seductive influence of CTs as a form of mass entertainment, and by unabashed populists who use them to tar their political rivals. Though they still frequently draw ridicule, conspiracy claims are now a mainstream form of grievance, spread by people—rich, poor, weak, and powerful—across the political spectrum. This is largely why academics in the behavioral and social sciences, concerned by the harmful impact of CTs on public discourse and social behavior, have begun to treat them and the people who promote them as objects of serious study.

Sadly, committed Christians are no strangers to the conspiracy mindset, and not only those who belong to fringe communities obsessed with end-times prophecy and creeping authoritarianism. Hence, learning to identify the common elements of conspiracist thinking and guarding themselves, their relationships, and their faith communities against its corrosive influence, is a timely and urgent issue for those who claim to be followers of Christ.

This short book (or long “discussion paper,” as its authors describe it) is the product of fifteen science and theology authors who are committed Christians and associates of the Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology (ISCAST), an Australian organization that promotes dialogue on the intersection of faith and science. The central goal of this work is to harmonize the academic research on conspiracy thinking with biblical ethics in order to help Christian leaders and their communities address the