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Science Has Been Hijacked (Work Station Two)

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Gary B. Swanson

In college football, the most prestigious recognition for an individual player is the Heisman Trophy, awarded at the end of each season to the outstanding player of the year. Named for the distinguished college football coach John W. Heisman, the trophy has become a symbol of athletic accomplishment on the gridiron and an obscenely lucrative career in professional football.

Although John Heisman was a successful and respected football coach, he placed a strong emphasis on education that is little heard of anymore. Certainly not in an age when the college draft system occupies ESPN and *Sports Illustrated* nearly round the clock for two weeks out of the year.

One day Heisman confronted an arrogant young football star on his team and said, “Red, I’ve taken you out of the lineup today because your grades aren’t good enough.”

“But coach,” the player protested, “don’t you know that the sports

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writers are calling this toe on my right foot the ‘million-dollar toe?’”

“What good is that,”

Coach Heisman snapped, “if you have a 15-cent head?”

The coach was pointing out to the player that he needed to apply a plumb line to his life. And this is a message that we could all benefit from now and again. In today’s world there is so much information swirling around us—through radio, TV, motion pictures, the Internet, books, magazines, newspapers, billboards—that it’s difficult to stay true to what we know is best. Every day presents thousands of new snippets of information produced by countless institutes and foundations and hearings and caucuses. And somehow we’re supposed to select from and compose these snippets into a cogent mosaic on which to conduct our lives.

In this process the outcome is all based on what we have decided to accept as absolute. The acceptance of an absolute is a basic part of life,

whether you're an athlete or not.

That is what the apostle Paul was referring to when he pointed out that God chooses the "foolish things of the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor. 1:27, NIV). The world has its absolutes all wrong: It considers Christianity to be foolish.

Consider the white-hot confrontation between faith and science that is currently addressed daily in the media. What once was no more than a battle among the most highly educated in academia has erupted into the streets, so to speak, as local school boards clash over what will be presented as truth to our children.

And ironically, science is exercising tyranny of thought in much the same way the church dealt with Galileo. Science may not be going to quite the extreme that the church did through the offices of the Inquisition (i.e., putting him under house arrest for the rest of his life), but its impact is vastly more powerful—and devastating. There are, apparently, far more effective means of suppressing ideas nowadays.

In popular culture today, evolution's proof is considered a *fait accompli*. In its overview of the second millennium, *Time* magazine reverently observed: "Darwinism remains one of the most successful scientific theories ever promulgated."¹ For the past century, science has been doing everything it can,

with the aid and abetment of the popular media, to marginalize and discredit those who would like to see the issue of creation and evolution discussed openly.

The modernist worldview perceives faith and science as mutually exclusive. They are not: "All true science is in harmony with [God's] works; . . . Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high, and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. . . . [T]he book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other."²

Faith and science are not at odds. Faith is at odds with those who have hijacked science and turned it into an intolerant juggernaut. Even some scientists are aware of this and have expressed discomfort over it. Swedish professor of theoretical astrophysics Bengt Gustafsson has described his concern over "the commercial interests behind what I fear has become the religion of our time—belief in science."³

Today science has become the establishment. It is dominated by the so-called authorities who accept evolution as a worldview and who declare anyone else merely "unscientific." But science, in its truest, purest definition, is not unanimously anti-creationist. It's just that you won't hear much of this idea in the media.

At the end of the day, it all comes

down to this: When you sit down to your microscope or telescope or whatever scientific instrument you're utilizing, on what absolute will you base your conclusions about the data you're collecting? What, for you, will be the final authority? Because no absolute can ever be proven conclusively, the basic question is: On what have you fixed your faith?

"It is now recognized, even in science," writes theologian Robert E. Webber, "that one needs to bring to 'fact' a framework of thought that is based on faith. The assumption that there is *no* God is a faith-commitment as much as the assumption that there is a God."⁴

For a Christian, this "framework of thought" is spiritual. "We fix our eyes," wrote the apostle Paul, "not on what is seen, but on what is unseen" (2 Cor. 4:18, NIV). This is one of the many elegant paradoxes of the Christian worldview: How do you fix your eyes on something that you cannot see? Take a moment, just as a "scientific" experiment, and give this a try. See if you can focus on something that is unseen. Preliminary scientific hypothesis: Attempts to focus one's physical vision on something that is invisible induces headaches.

But the apostle Paul, of course, was considering a completely different process. He was not discoursing on the physical realm, but on the spiritual.

The established scientific community will claim that they rely solely on the physical realm, on what they can observe physically. What they don't want to admit, however, is that they are interpreting all that physical data that they are collecting on how they answer a spiritual question: What is truth? And that is a spiritual question.

The greatest—the eternal—truth is something that simply cannot be measured. The apostle Paul addressed this in another way: "What is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18, NIV). For this and other reasons, informed people are coming to the conclusion that science is only one among many implements in the toolbox they use to search for eternal truth.

And Christians know that whatever project is produced by the implements of that toolbox, it must ever be true to the plumb line of God's Word.

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- ² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 115.
- ³ *The New Faith-Science Debate*, John M. Mangum, ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), p. 8.
- ⁴ *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 21, 22, emphasis supplied.