

Two communications with the Templeton Foundation in May 2011

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Sir John Templeton's vision formed during 1972-1981

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Abstract: This essay is an unprecedented proposal – recognition of Sir John Templeton’s philanthropic vision of 1981 and celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of his book "The humble approach: scientists discover God". To debate against a statement from a news feature on a recent science journal *Nature*, "Faith in Science" (*Nature* 470, 323-325, Feb 17, 2011), that Sir John Templeton had "no intention of wasting his money on junk science or unanswerables such as whether God exists", I began to read Sir John Templeton’s extensive writings for collecting evidence. When I critically focused on his book of 1981, "The humble approach: scientists discover God", unexpectedly, I discovered that Sir John Templeton had already well formed his philanthropic vision in 1981.

This year, *Nature* published a news feature, "Faith in Science" (*Nature* 470, 323-325, Feb 17, 2011) by its Washington DC Editor, Dr. M. Mitchell Waldrop. Though it is quite informative, reflecting certain stance of mainstream science, I interpreted it as an intention to steering Templeton Foundations’ granting system towards atheism and continue to disengage the scientific research on spirituality. Reading this carefully written news, I was much struck by its quoting from well known atheist scientists, not from well known scientists who are God believers, especially to those who have made effort to bridge science and faith, to influence the foundation's decision makers. In particular, I found it hard to believe what the news said about Sir John Templeton, "no intention of wasting his money on junk science or unanswerables such as whether God exists", a quoting from Templeton Foundation’s Dr. Barnaby Marsh. Since my work over the past several years have straightforwardly based on the directly approaching God’s existence through science, I am concerning if my four recent applications will be cut off by Dr. Marsh’s words or standard according to the *Nature* news feature.

What I have hypothesized is the opposite of “junk science or unanswerables such as whether God exists”, that the true mission of Templeton Foundation has been, and will always be to advance the spiritual dimension, or in another word, advancing the creator's spiritual power, a continuous creative process through humble approaches, multidiscipline integrations and critically through science. In order to quote Sir John Templeton's own words to prove my hypothesis, I went back to read his inauguration book again, "The Humble Approach: Scientists Discover God", which was published in January 1981, and republished with an additional chapter in 1995 and 1998.

I realized that this year is the thirtieth anniversary of his book of 1981, “The Humble Approach”.

By yesterday (May 11, 2011) I have arrived at my conclusion that Sir John Templeton's vision was formed during 1972 and 1981. And his book of 1981 was indeed an important milestone for his evolved philanthropic vision.

The Templeton Foundation website has elaborated Sir John Templeton's vision through many quotes from his book of 2000, "Possibilities for over one hundred fold more spiritual information; the humble approach in theology and science". With interest I have compared this book with the one of 1981. I found most of his vision has already developed in 1981, though his 2000 book has more details, revisions and addressed from some new perspectives.

By 2000, there was a slight change of his vision, from focusing on God, the Creator (see another book in 1994, “The Evidence of purpose: scientists discover the creator”), to more focused on the spirituality itself, though there were not much substantial changes. This slight change reflected the significant difficulty has been experienced to directly study God through scientific approach. This would be consistence with Dr. Marsh's words in the *Nature* news feature. Especially by the time 2008, the new atheism moment in mainstream science started from 2004, seemed gaining momentum. For example, even in the Templeton Foundation's Big Questions Essays, “Does science make believe in God obsolete?” – An essay by a well-known atheist Dr. Steven Pinker was the first one, who used scientific thinking to say yes. Dr. Pinker stated that evolutionary psychology and cognitive neuroscience can solve the morality matter, God plays no role in it, and therefore, science makes a belief in God obsolete. The scientific approach to study spirituality had been going towards downhill, and the flowing energy was not in a right direction, to my humble opinion. Sadly, Sir Templeton passed away that summer (2008).

However, the slight change of Sir John Templeton vision from God, the creator, to spirituality, did one thing that should be recognized, that it moved toward the direction of energy. In late summer and early autumn 2008, I was able to figure out the relationship between God, the supernatural power or energy and HIS mass through faith constant. My continuous working on the faith science, as I have called, led to the stance change of mainstream science and the end of new atheism moment by the end of 2008. (See Yang, C. *The Impact of Faith Science*. < <http://www.energinity.com/fsimpact.pdf> > 2010).

Sir Templeton had been one of the most important and most unique figures to inspire right directions in advancing mankind faith over the past several decades. Therefore, studying the evolution of his vision should teach us more than just following him.

His vision of 1981 was so important that it gradually led his decision to establish the John Templeton Foundation in 1987 to support research into religion, God and spiritual progress, a step much further from his 1972 milestone, the establishment of Templeton Prize to award those who have contributed significantly to the progress of religion. (And it was the first time in 1985 that Templeton Prize was awarded to a scientist, Dr. Alister Hardy, who has also investigated religion).

Being a frequent reader of the Templeton Foundation's website, I hope to see in the section of "Milestones in the Life of Sir John Templeton", there is a 1981 and his book. This will fill a gap between 1972 and 1987. Perhaps we should study further about the formation of his philanthropic vision during the period of 1972-1981 to celebrate its thirtieth anniversary this year. Please kindly consider my humble suggestions.

Next year will be the fortieth anniversary of the Templeton Prize. I am interested in knowing how Sir John Templeton developed his early vision of advancing mankind faith that led to a milestone in 1972 and the establishment of the Prize.

My next essay will be "Sir Templeton's inspiring scientists to discover God" to prove my hypothesis formed in this essay, as an argument against the statement of Templeton "had no intention of wasting his money on junk science or unanswerables such as whether God exists". Like the concept of "junk DNA" was defined ten years ago but they have been found important functions later, "junk science" in the exploration of spiritual dimension may well be the dark energy of faith science.

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(Note: Due to my interesting communications with Dr. Barnaby Marsh, my next essay becomes my views on the Templeton Foundation visions.)

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The Templeton Vision through My View

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Abstract: This essay reports my further study conclusion of Sir John Templeton's philanthropic vision and my opinion on Dr. Jack Templeton's opportunities. I propose Sir John's vision of five stages – 1. Early stage up to 1972, the establishment of the Templeton Prize; 2. From 1972 to 1981, the inauguration of Sir John's vision through his book, *The humble approach, scientists discover God*; 3. From 1981 to 1987, the establishment of the Templeton Foundation; 4. From 1987-2000, the refinement of Sir John's vision through his book of 2000, *Possibilities for over hundredfold more spiritual information: The humble approach in theology and science*, Sir John's vision changed from focus on God (1981) and Creator (1994) to focus on the spirituality (2000); 5. From 2000 to 2008, the struggling between faith and science, the long struggling has been continued during this stage, due to the lack of critical breakthroughs in the directly scientific study of God, new scientific atheism movement emerged during 2004 to 2008. I also propose the current stage, from 2008 to now, new spiritual information. By December 17, 2008, the mainstream has ended its new scientific atheism movement of four years, and advocated co-existence between science and religion. My proposal of the new vision for the Templeton Foundation and its president Dr. Jack Templeton is – “From co-existence to the grand unification between faith and science”. I argue how to understand that the existence of God can be scientifically and directly approached, which is among the greatest truth.

Since I was asked by Dr. Barnaby Marsh about my interest of Sir John Templeton's philanthropic vision, I did some homework from three perspectives, e.g. the past, the

current and the next or the immediate future with regarding the Templeton vision, which I have collectively called. I believe Sir John Templeton's vision has been unique in many ways, which has been continuously transforming the mankind thinking. And Dr. Jack Templeton is in a very good position to continue the discoveries and transformations that I perceived as a very possible new era of grand unification. So I wrote them down for further studies.

The Past: Five Stages of Sir John Templeton's Vision

Five stages of Sir John Templeton's vision are what I have classified tentatively, which can be discussed and modified further when it is necessary.

Early stage, up to 1972, the establishment of the Templeton Prize

Interesting matters are how Sir John Templeton realized that advancing mankind faith was so important that eventually he decided to award those who would have made significant contributions to advance mankind faith, and how he decided the amount should always be slightly more than a Nobel Prize. This stage was not only just the establishment of an award in faith progresses, but also a demonstration of mankind thinking into a new era.

This led a proposal of a program "The early development of Sir John Templeton's Philanthropic Vision". Projects will include, not limited to, Sir John Templeton's correspondence project, his notebook, or other writings, speeches, interviews, media stories and coverage, and other witnesses including individual's memories and etc. (The project would actually cover the whole life of Sir John's activities but it was brought up here)

The second stage, up to 1981, the inauguration of Sir John Templeton's philanthropic vision, "The Humble Approach" in advancing religion through science

In his inauguration book published on January 1981, *The Humble Approach: Scientists Discover God*, Sir John Templeton introduced that

"We are perched on the frontiers of future knowledge. Even though we stand on the enormous mountain of information collected over the last five centuries of scientific progress, we have only fleeting glimpses of the future. To a large extent, the future lies before us like a vast wilderness of unexplored reality. The God who created and sustained His evolving universe through eons of progress and development has not placed our

generation at the tag end of the creative process. He has placed us at a new beginning. We are here for the future.”(Page 1)

And he wrote, “Nevertheless, at this moment in time, scientist, theologians, laity, all of us must utilize this current world view in our continuing participation in creation. Admitting we might be proven wrong, we launch boldly into new discoveries. And what new discoveries are to be made? Evolution may be not ending with man on earth but only beginning.” (Page 30)

Sir John Templeton’s central vision is the “Humble Approach”, or Humility. He wrote,

“The word humility is used here to mean admission that God infinitely exceeds anything anyone has ever said of him; and that He is infinitely beyond human comprehension and understanding. A prime purpose of this book is to help us become more humble and thereby reduce the stumbling blocks placed in our paths toward heaven by our own egos.”(Page 34)

“By learning humility, we find that the purpose of life on earth is vastly deeper than any human mind can grasp.”(Page 128)

“As we become more and more humble, we can learn more about God.”(Page 128)

“And God is revealing Himself more and more to human inquiry, not always through prophetic visions or scriptures, but through the diligent research of modern scientists into observable phenomena and forces.”(Page 24)

On “Spiritual growth”, Sir John wrote,

“Spiritual growth can be achieved in part by knowledge – to overcome our ignorance and self-centeredness until we are in tune with the divine. Since God possesses all knowledge, any addition knowledge or understanding we can acquire makes us more like Him. As followers of the humble approach, we must always be alert to new discoveries and new insights into both spiritual and natural phenomena.”(Page 95)

“Great spiritual truths – truths of the real life – are the same in all ages, and will come to any man and any woman who will make the condition whereby they can come.”(Page 95)

On the “Laws of Spirit”, Sir John wrote,

“By ‘laws of spirit’ we mean universal principles of the unseen world that can be determined and tested by extensive examination of human behavior and other data.”(Page 118)

“..., this field appears about as disorganized and controversial as the natural sciences were in the millenniums before Galileo.”(Page118)

“We should first become comfortable with the concept of spiritual laws and not fear that research into them violates some static condition of God’s universe. We may indeed discover that some laws are eternal verities, never to be altered. But with an open-minded humble approach, let us begin.”(Page 120)

The above quotes are just a few examples of Sir John Templeton’s vision.

Through 13 chapters and 128 pages, Sir John Templeton elaborated, “The Blossoming Time of Man”, “The Vast Unseen”, “The New World of Time”, “Humble about What?” “Benefits from Humility”, “Creation Through Change”, “Spiritual Progress”, “The Benefits of Competition”, “Earth as a School”, “Creative Thinking”, “Love and Happiness The True Test”, and “Laws of Spirit”.

And also Sir John Templeton provided an abundant bibliography of 115 pages in the same book.

The third stage, up to 1987, the establishment of The Templeton Foundation

Beginning with only two staff members working for the foundation, Sir John Templeton put his vision in further action. This stage is also needed to be studied through various methods.

The fourth stage, up to 2000, the refinement of Sir John Templeton's vision

The publication of Sir John Templeton’s book, *Possibilities for over hundredfold more spiritual information: The humble approach in theology and science*” became the most comprehensive single account of his philanthropic vision.

A comparative study of Sir John's vision of 1981 and 2000 would be one of the interesting projects. The prime of Sir John’s vision in 1981 and the refinement and new development by 2000 would be one of the focuses for the study of the evolution of his vision.

Among thirteen chapter titles, nine of them Sir John wrote as asking questions in his book of 2000. Instead only one question was the chapter title among its thirteen chapter titles in his book of 1981, and the only one was “Humble about what?”

“We launch boldly new discoveries”, as Sir John stated in 1981 (page 30), and he did launch the “ask big questions” and research big questions of spirituality.

The fifth stage, up to the late 2008, the struggling between faith and science.

Troubling stage between science and religion, as it was clearly demonstrated a rise and fall of the "Scientific New Atheism Moment 2004-2008". (See Yang, C. *The Impact of Faith Science*. < <http://www.energinity.com/fsimpact.pdf> > 2010).

Here the first time I used the term, "scientific new atheism moment". One of my major works was to end the Moment in December 2008. Some critical details can be found in my essay, "The Impact of Faith Science", which was attached in my submitted four grant applications.

Since this stage was a consequential one from previous stage, the approach to understand the final years of Sir John Templeton's vision will employ the same approach as for the early stage of his vision up to 1972, which I have already mentioned earlier in this essay.

The Current- from the end of 2008 up to now: "New Spiritual Information"

Or the sixth stage, from December 17, 2008 up to now. Though I termed this stage as "New Spiritual Information", it can also be called the "co-existence stage between religion and science". The mainstream science and academic defined this stage after the end of attacking mainstream religion from 2004-2008. For example, when the Templeton Prize was awarded to Professor Francisco J. Ayala in 2010, the message of science and religion coexistence and no mingling was very clear to the public.

I believe the current stage of coexistence between science and religion is provisional. Though it reflects some main truth, it failed to reflect the whole truth.

For example, apparently I have discovered the way to actually bridge the faith and the reason and in the same time to advance both religion and science. Therefore, religion and science has been scientifically and successfully emerged toward oneness, though it is just the beginning. There is much new spiritual information here to my opinion being His servant. Or can this work be recognized as the realization that "The humble approach: scientists discover God"?

Also Sir John Templeton's vision to advance religion / spirituality through science would expect more than just coexistence between science and faith.

Recognizing such a breakthrough, which has made one big question unanswerable answerable, may generate an opportunity to advance Sir John Templeton's vision, and may be also pivotal for the next immediate future of the world history.

The Next or the Immediate Future: from Co existence to the Grand Unification between Faith and Science

Should Sir John Templeton's philanthropic vision not only be continuously carried out, but also be advanced when there have been the reality and the possibility?

Sir John Templeton's vision, "he firmly believed that the greatest truths might someday be available to us if we asked the Big Questions of life and existence with an attitude of humility, gratitude, and open-mindedness."

What are the greatest truths?

Is not it the existence of God the greatest truth?

It was an unanswerable question, that whether God exist, for too many centuries, and it became a dogma that science could not prove the existence of God. What will happen if it was indeed became an answerable question, and it was already happened?

Are we ready to take a close look at it, study it, discuss it with the originator and give an honest opinion?

Like several thousands of years ago, when the dogma was "whether the earth is not flat is an unanswerable question", then around Aristotle time, mankind was able to come up with convincing method to prove that the earth is sphere. Was the then scientific authority ready to recognize and accept the truth? How long did it take them to get one of the greatest truths?

Like five hundreds of years ago when Copernicus proposed that the earth moves around the sun, was the then scientific authority ready to recognize and accept the idea? Especially, when Galileo was able to prove the first time directly that heaven's bodies do not orbit around earth, did the then scientific authorities ready to embrace such an exciting advance? Why it took more than a century for them to get one of the greatest truths? (I have the answer from one of my last year's writing, "Science and New Science (3) – Galileo Galilei Suffered from Some Scientific Authorities, Available from *Nature Precedings* <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/npre.2010.5314.1>>).

It is clear to me that Sir John Templeton's vision of scientifically progressing religion will inevitably lead into the unification of faith and science and in the same time, both science and religion will be advanced.

Therefore, I pray that Dr. Jack Templeton and his team will catch the possibility to advance Sir John Templeton's vision.

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