

Editorial viewpoint ...

By Brother Peter Benyola

Sir Isaac Newton, a 17th-century physicist, alchemist and mathematician, often engaged in discussions with his colleagues and friends on the subject of God, creation, and design. A legend recounted in *The Truth: God or Evolution?* — and widely repeated — tells of one of Newton's projects after his atheist-scientist friend denied the evidence of design in the universe. Allegedly, he was motivated to build a clockwork model of the Solar System on a table in his home, which included all the planets and their moons that were known at the time. Each orb rotated on its axis, revolving around the others and the center of the model, powered by a lever and system of gears beneath the table. When Newton's scientist friend returned to visit, he noticed it and was intrigued by its impressive workmanship. He asked, "How were you able to construct such an ingenious device?" Newton casually replied, "I just tossed the pieces at random into a corner, and they accidentally assembled themselves into this model." Annoyed, his friend protested, "That's absurdly impossible."

"A lot less absurd," Newton countered, "Than your belief that such was the origin of the real Solar System, of which this toy is but a much-simplified model."

Having laid the groundwork for modern engineering, Newton's research is well respected and regarded — especially the three laws of motion, which we learned about in grade school. Yet, he was more sensitive in his study of our world than to just take into account the "empirically quantifiable." Quantum physicist Stephen Hawking — and many others — have brilliant minds and are also known for scientific contributions. Hawking, who has famously said, "There is no place for a Creator," is probably agnostic, having tried to discredit Newton any way he can, such as in his appendix to *A Brief History of Time*. Some scientists might be annoyed that a pillar of science could possibly also be a man of faith. Yet, Newton was an accomplished authority and still managed to mesh with the scientific community. In *The General Scholium*, he said that the organization of the Solar System was under the "counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being." Hundreds of years earlier, Alma the Younger was more assertive when he said it. "Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God, yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form, do witness that there is a Supreme Creator."

In his letter to the saints at Ephesus, Apostle Paul said, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." As people with bodies and minds of flesh, we aren't inclined to think of understanding as something that is in the realm of our heart. To look at the facts of Scripture as a historian or academic and acknowledge them is one thing, but to believe them by the convincing power of the Holy Spirit is something else — mental acceptance of raw facts does not mean conversion. And to be a follower of Christ takes great courage. Often the things of faith fly in the face of "empirically based reason." So to declare that you believe that Jesus Christ is God Who descended to this earth in the manner of flesh; Who, within the parameters of time, shed His own blood and died a horrible physical death to make eternal life possible; then emerged from the crypt alive to prove that His death was accepted by God; takes boldness before a mocking, faithless, secular world that demands a sign in order to believe.

It's sad when learned, intelligent people passionately observe and study this beautiful creation and somehow get lost in it, failing to see God as the author of it all. Understanding, in and of itself, is not a bad thing but not channeled by the Spirit, can misguide the fallen human soul. When understanding is laced elegantly with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we realize that not all things are relegated just to the territory of the mind. Really, if great "head knowledge" were necessary before faith could grow, would any of us be here with a testimony? Our hearts were converted before our minds were satisfied. And years after we started our journey with the Lord, we still have many questions, looking through an opaque lens. Still, there is something no atheist nor scientist can smugly debunk, citing the letters after his name. It's the feeling of peace, grace, enlightenment and joy that flooded our hearts when the Holy Spirit entered, which also allows us to see with God's sight. *That's ours*. If we hold fast, it will sustain us until we join with the Lord, when He will impart His perfect understanding.

We can ponder the whys and wherefores of this universe. We can venture into its expanse. As far as we will search for answers, the most extraordinary of all creation's splendors is found within the heart: the critical domain of faith. Elohim, our Creator-God, has patiently waited there all along.