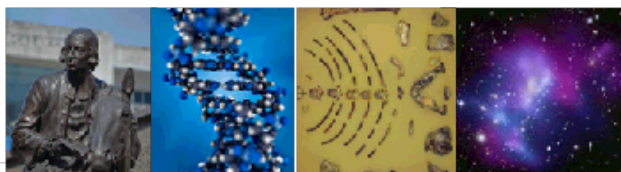


# WesleyNexus

*Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition*



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January 28, 2012

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

## **How the Hippies Saved Physics**

David Kaiser in the June issue of Scientific American has written a fun article extracted from the book he wrote about a group of Ph. D. physicists that formed a Berkeley based gathering of physicists called the Fundamental Fysiks Group. This group of scientists acquired their credentials during a time when the job market for physicists was shrinking and the ability to get meaningful employment in their discipline was increasingly difficult. To cope with these uncertainties, the group began to meet at 4:00 on Fridays at Lawrence Livermore. Kaiser may have overstated the impact of this group but presents an entertaining description of a group of scientists that many may have never heard of. The article can be found [here](#).

## **Science in Congregations**

The [Science in Congregations](#) initiative is a grant program that is funded by the John Templeton Foundation and calls for a sustained, creative collaboration between practitioners in the fields of science (scientists or science educators) and theology / faith practice (pastors) who are already engaged with one another through shared participation in the life of a congregation. (From the Scientists in Congregation website.)

## **Reminder: Evolution Weekend is on February 10-12**

There are now 500 congregations registered for Evolution Weekend which takes place on February 10-12, 2012. If your church has not registered and wishes to do so, please contact Michael Zimmerman at [mz@theclergyletterproject.org](mailto:mz@theclergyletterproject.org). The web page for this year's Evolution Weekend can be found [here](#).

## **Annual Question from [Edge.org](#)**

Every year, Edge.org presents a provocative question to a diverse group of scientists and intellectuals and posts their response. This year's question is "What is your favorite deep, elegant or beautiful explanation?" There are 192 responses this year from thought leaders with expertise ranging from physics to business. The list of contributors with links to their responses can be found [here](#).

## **"Science can help church keep its young folk"**

Gary B. Sherman, a veterinarian and life scientist from Montgomery County, Maryland posted a United Methodist News Service Commentary recently addressing the importance of the "United Methodist Church to be more accepting of science throughout all our ministries for the benefit of all God's children." Dr. Sherman has taught and conducted research for 25 years and now serves as National Program Leader for Veterinary Science at the USDA's National Institute of Food and

Agriculture. He is a member of Oakdale Emory United Methodist Church in Olney, Md. His article can be found [here](#). A referenced article from the Barna Group on reasons youth leave the church can be found [here](#).

### **United Methodist 2012 General Conference**

Al Kuelling, a United Methodist living in Indiana has pointed out that there are three petitions that will be presented at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference that support a positive relationship between science and religion within The United Methodist Church. The petitions can be found [here](#). (Note: The text was provided by Al Kuelling.)

### **Biological Evolution and Its Critics**

#### **Note: WesleyNexus Participant Feedback**

A number of WesleyNexus participants wrote replies to our posting anti-evolution materials on our website. You can find them [here](#).

The Huffington Post has a science and religion section that posts regular and engaging articles by a variety of commentators. In [Once More, With Feeling: Adam, Evolution and Evangelicals](#), Pete Enns does a nice job of laying out the challenge faced by many, though not all, evangelicals as they try to engage what we know about biological evolution and the text in Genesis.

In [Science and Origins](#), Byron Berger reviews two books that could not be more different. The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy by Nancy Pearcey & Charles Thaxton and The Language of Science and Faith: Straight Answers to Genuine Questions by Karl Giberson and Francis Collins. Published in 1994, the Pearcey and Thaxton book has not aged well and, within the scientific community, has essentially been ruled as irrelevant. However, it does reflect the perspective of many evangelicals as noted by Pete Enns in the above mentioned article. The Giberson and Collins book was published last year and presents a new line of thinking for those within the evangelical community still struggling with the issue of biological evolution. The very fact that Byron Berger chose a book that is clearly outdated to support balance within his review reflects the truly difficult task that many evangelicals have coming to grips with current findings in the biological sciences.

The article in First Things [Intelligent Design: Atheists to the Rescue](#) by Howard Kainz also reflects this ongoing tension and argues for support against biological evolution from an unsuspected source: secular atheists. WesleyNexus supports the United Methodist Book of Discipline which states that “we affirm the validity of the claims of science in describing the natural world and in determining what is scientific.” (160. Part IV - Social Principles - I. The Natural World) and therefore side with Giberson and Collins on the status of evolutionary understanding in biology. We also recognize how difficult it is for many in the Wesleyan tradition to come to grips with this understanding while still affirming their faith. The topic is important and one around which conversation is needed. So let’s talk!

God Bless,  
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