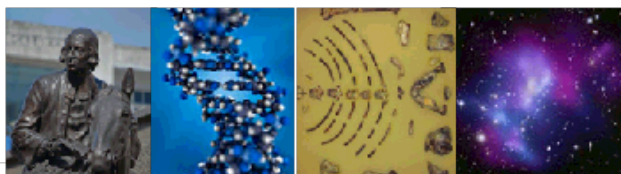


# WesleyNexus

*Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition*



Home

Back

Links

Contact Us

March 26, 2013

**Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:**

## **Over 100 Attend Science and Religion Event at Baltimore-Washington Mission Center**



We at WesleyNexus want to thank you for your time and interest in engaging, promoting and expanding the science and religion dialogue. Last month, as part of the Clergy Project's Evolution Weekend, over 120 persons gathered at the **UMC Baltimore-Washington Conference Mission Center** to participate in the **Darkwood Brew** webcast "Evolving Universe, Evolving Faith". As part of our program at the center, a distinguished panel including Nobel Prize winner John Mather, Connie Bertka of the Smithsonian Human Origins Project, Thomas Burnett of the National Academy of Science, and Rabbi George Driesen of the Institute for Science and Judaism discussed issues brought up during the webcast. The panel was moderated by Dr. E. Maynard Moore, President of WesleyNexus, Inc. WesleyNexus gives our appreciation to the The Local Organizing Committee for Evolution Weekend-MD 2013 for enabling this event to happen and to the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference for allowing the event to utilize their facility. We hope that this event will be the first of many.

## **Nobel Prize Winner Gives Sermon at Paint Branch Unitarian Church, Silver Spring, Maryland**



**John Mather, Ph. D.** in physics and Nobel Prize winner (2006 with George Smoot in physics), delivered the sermon at Paint Branch Unitarian Church on Mach 17, 2013. Dr. Mather participated in the WesleyNexus sponsored program celebrating Evolution Weekend in February. His sermon can be found [here](#).

His biography can be found [here](#).

## **Smithsonian Human Origins Project Hosts Panel with Friends of WesleyNexus**



## **Rabbi George Driesen and Jim Miller, Ph. D.**

participated in a dialogue on scientific and religious perspectives on human evolution on Friday, March 22 in the Smithsonian Hall of Human Origins. Both Rabbi Driesen and Dr. Miller are friends and occasional participants in events sponsored by WesleyNexus. Rabbi Driesen is the founder and director of the Institute for Science and Judaism

and Dr. James Miller, retired clergy in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., is General Missioner for the Presbyterian Association on Science, Technology and the Christian Faith (PASTCF). The web page for the Human Origins Project can be found [here](#). The next event will be on April 4 at 12 noon in the Hall of Human Origins where **Dr. Emily Goble**, a Peter Buck Postdoctoral Fellow in the Smithsonian's Human Origins Program, will be on hand with touchable objects to answer questions and talk about her research. The web page for this event can be found [here](#).

### **NOUR Foundation**

“The Nour Foundation explores meaning and commonality in human experience by adopting a multidisciplinary and integrative approach to the study of principles and values that universally engender greater understanding, tolerance, and unity among human beings worldwide” (Nour Mission Statement).

On March 23, 2011, the Nour Foundation sponsored a discussion at The New York Academy of Sciences with Lisa Miller, John Haught, Nancy Murphy and Kenneth Miller. The program titled “The Pursuit of Immortality: From the Ego to the Soul” can be found [here](#). This is just one of a number of videos that may be of interest to WesleyNexus participants.



### **Dr. Phillip Zimbardo Gives TED Talk**

Psychologist Phillip Zimbardo addressed the problem of evil and suffering in a TED talk earlier this March. His initial controversial study conducted with Stanley Milgram on Obedience to

Authority was conducted in 1963 and has been referenced by introductory texts in psychology for decades. In this talk, Zimbardo presents his current thinking on the subject in a 23 minute romp through the topic. Warning: some of the images in the talk are disturbing and may be unsuitable for young or sensitive audiences. The talk can be found [here](#).



### **Colin McGinn Reviews Kurzweil Book: How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed**

The British philosopher Colin McGinn, who currently teaches at the University of Miami,

reviews the audacious claims presented by Ray Kurzweil in his new book, [How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed](#). For those who are not familiar with Kurzweil, his work on speech recognition inaugurated many of the developments in computer /human interfaces that free the end user from demands of the computer keyboard. Not known for modesty or understatement, Kurzweil has made numerous statements on the possible future of the human species. McGinn, with a bit of sarcasm, identifies Kurzweil’s purpose is to “reveal—no less—the secret of human thought.” Kurzweil is going to tell us, in no uncertain terms, “how to create a mind:” that is to say, he has a grand theory of the human mind, in which its secrets will be finally revealed.” McGinn’s conclusion: “interesting in places, fairly readable, moderately informative, but wildly overstated.” The article can be found [here](#).



## Excerpt from Religion Without God by Ronald Dworkin



Another very engaging book “synopsis” can be found in the April 4, 2013 edition of the NY Review of Books: offered by the editors called “**Religion Without God.**” This is the title of a forthcoming book to be published by Harvard University Press later this year. Before he died on February 14, Ronald Dworkin sent to the editors of the New York Review the book text, and the editors have here published an excerpt from the first chapter. The author, a noted philosopher and scholar, keys off of the famous statement by Albert Einstein that, though an atheist, Albert considered himself a deeply religious man. So Dworkin pursues this notion of “religious atheism” (as recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court) as well as the atheism of contemporary zealots such as Richard Dawkins, and grounds his argument in the notion of “universally accepted values” that help define us as humans. This excerpt (found [here](#)) is worth considerable attention, and the book promises to be a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion we are all having.

## Evolution, Creation and Semiotics Project



**Christopher Southgate**, Research Fellow in the Department of Theology at the University of Exeter and trained biochemist with a Ph. D. from Cambridge, along with his colleague **Dr. Andrew Robinson**, have embarked on an interdisciplinary project in philosophy, science and religion, developed with the support of the Science and Transcendence Advanced Research Series (STARS) programme of the Centre for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS). The project will investigate the emergence of signs, interpretations and meaning from the origin of life to the incarnation of the Word. It seeks to develop a philosophical framework where both science and religion can find a place. Based on the semiotics (theory of signs) research of American philosopher Charles S. Peirce, the project will explore his semiotic framework as a mediator between science and religion, leading to new hypotheses in philosophy, human evolution and theology. Co-investigators include Terrence Deacon, Ph.D., Professor of Biological Anthropology and Linguistics, U.C. Berkeley, Niles Lehman, Ph.D., Professor of Chemistry, Portland State University, and Bruce Weber, Ph.D., Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry, C.S.U. Fullerton. The web site can be found [here](#).

## Robert Neville’s New Home Page



**Robert Neville**, philosopher, theologian and elder in the United Methodist Church, has a new expanded web site that provides significant biographical materials, an up-to-date bibliography and, of particular interest to WesleyNexus participants, a cache of sermons, 97 in all. Over the course of his prolific career, Neville has addressed how one can be religious in an age characterized by pluralism, secularism and skepticism. Though his positions are not without controversy, he is, without a doubt, one of the most significant philosophical theologians of our time. Through his sermons, those outside the

academy can get a feel for the mind of this most productive thinker. You can find his web site [here](#).

### atom + Eve: **Using Science in Pastoral Ministry**

On Saturday March 16, 2013, The Science and Religion Study Group which functions as part of the Washington Theological Consortium, hosted the fourth in its series of conferences – all in the framework of the overall theme ATOM + EVE: Using Science in Pastoral Ministry. This has been a 24-month project (beginning with the initial conference on November 12, 2011, which focused on “the Origin of the Universe”) to aid those engaged in pastoral ministry to become conversant with contemporary issues in science. This concluding conference addressed broad themes within the dominant paradigm of evolution, and was hosted at St. Paul College in Washington DC. The day featured four major presentations: (1) “**Anthropic Coincidences and the Multiverse Idea**” presented by Dr. Stephen Barr, professor of physics at the University of Delaware, (2) “**A Psychological Anthropic Principle: Can We Live Outside of the Boundaries (and Can We Live Within Them)?**” presented by Dr. Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Professor of Psychology and Department head at Virginia Commonwealth University; (3) “**The Material Turn**” presented by Dr. Michael J. Scanlon, O.S.A., professor emeritus at Villanova University, and (4) “**Christ in Evolution**” presented by Dr. Ilia Delio, OSF who teaches at the Woodstock Center at Georgetown University. All four conferences over the four-year period, chaired by Dr. Joseph Wimmer of Catholic University and Dr. Daryl Domning of Howard University, attracted many persons into the science and religion dialogue. The project was sponsored in part through a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. A web site is planned to frame follow-up dialogue, and we will post the link when it is available.

God Bless,  
Rick Barr, Secretary, WesleyNexus  
wesleynexus@aol.com

