# WesleyNexus













Contact Us

May 28, 2013

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

I hope you all enjoyed your Memorial Day. We give thanks to those in our military who have given so much for their fellow citizens. Also keep in your thoughts and prayers those who have lost so much due to tornados, floods and storms. Below you will find a few articles and announcements for the month of May. As always, if you run across an item that you think should be posted on WesleyNexus, please let me know by sending an email to WesleyNexus@aol.com. I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter.

God Bless,

Rick Barr, WesleyNexus

## **Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Presents Science and Religion Resolution**

The Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference will meet the last week of May. On the agenda is a resolution 'To make evolutionary scientific realities of our life and knowledge a part of The United Methodist Church by rethinking and implementing "evolutionary scientific thinking" into our worship experience, our theological language, teaching, our songs and life experience in accordance with the



Book of Discipline Resolution number or Paragraph 160 F. This is a follow-up of three resolutions approved in 2008.' The resolution is sponsored by Henry F. Schwarzmann, a retired pastor from the conference. It resolves to make evolutionary science and thinking a priority in teaching and conveying the faith and in our efforts to educate, write church school literature, and relating the faith in our colleges and universities. The resolution can be found here.

#### United Methodist Scientist Author's Book Targets Questioning Young Adults

Michael Bunner is a Christian, an engineer and a member of the United Methodist Church.
Responding to the need to provide young people confused by the seeming conflict between science and religion so prevalent in the news, Bunner has written a book that provides a middle ground perspective. For him, science and religion are not



in conflict since they address different questions. As the article by Bruce Posten states, "in a nutshell, Bunner sees science as answering how and what questions, but unable to answer the more nonmaterial, purpose-driven and meaning-oriented why questions without falling back on philosophy or a belief system to interpret the science." Of course, this perspective is not new, as it reflects something of the independence approach made famous by Ian Barbour. But it is good to see a United Methodist taking the time to engage in the conversation and to target young adults.

Note: Thanks to Joseph Wolyniak, a DPhil Candidate, University of Oxford (Harris Manchester) and A Visiting Scholar, at Yale University (Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics) for pointing this out. I have not had a chance to read the book so the only information I have is from the article by Bruce Posten which can be found here.

#### Ted Talks and the Boundaries of Science and Pseudo-Science

I am sure that many of you have heard of TED Talks, an on-line library of popular lectures on a variety of subjects. At TED, they "believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives



and ultimately, the world. So we're building here a clearinghouse that offers free knowledge and inspiration from the world's most inspired thinkers, and also a community of curious souls to engage with ideas and each other." Many of the lectures are on scientific subjects but who gets to choose what is science? An interesting discussion appeared recently on the Huffington Post where the popular author, Deepak Chopra addresses the question of what is sound science, what is pseudo-science, and who are "goofballs". Again, who gets to decide anyway? The article, which can be found here, includes numerous distinguished scientists, engineers and researchers addressing this issue. The dialogue was instigated by a decision to "repost" two lectures by Rupert Sheldrake and Graham Hancock to the TED website from the original posting site on YouTube. This was due to complaints of questionable science by a number of viewers. (For more information on this action, see the TED link here. Especially at the cutting edge of science, it is not always clear when an idea reflects sound scientific thinking and when it goes too far.

### The Network for Spiritual Progressives

Michael Lerner, editor of TIKKUN magazine and rabbi of Beyt Tikkun synagogue in Berkeley and San Francisco along with



THE NETWORK OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESSIVES

"LOVE AND CARING...THE NEW BOTTOM LINE"

Sister Joan Chittister and Cornel West have founded the Network for Spiritual Progressives (NSP). NSP casts a wide net but includes as one of their areas of interest Science and Spirit. As Rabbi Lerner states on the website, "we are the heirs of the long evolution of Spirit. Each of us is the latest unfolding of the event of Creation. Our bodies are composed of the material that was shaped in the Big Bang. And so, too, our spirits. The loving goodness of the universe breathes us and breathes through us, giving us life and consciousness, and the capacity to recognize and love others." They have an extended text that can be found <a href="here">here</a> that lays out their perspective on this topic.

Participants of WesleyNexus may find this and other topics of interest. The NSP home page can be found here.

## The 59th Annual IRAS Summer Conference at Silver Bay, New York

From July 27 to August 3, 2013, The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) will convene for their yearly conference at Silver Bay, New York. This year's program will focus on Scientific,



Spiritual and Moral Challenges in solving the World Food Crisis. Conference Co-Chairs are Solomon Katz and Pat Bennett. Dr. Katz is director of the Krogman Center for Childhood Growth and Development at the University of Pennsylvania. Katz is also a leading expert on the anthropology of food. To register, go to <a href="http://www.iras.org/2013.html">http://www.iras.org/2013.html</a>

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