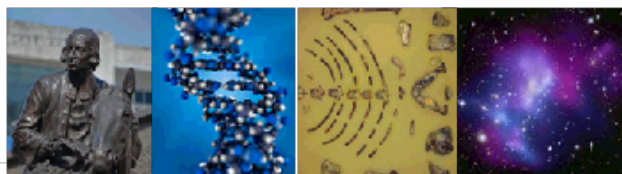


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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July 26, 2013

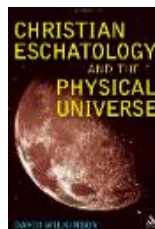
Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

I hope your summer so far has been enjoyable and that you have had some time to relax. I have had a chance to do a little reading and just finished the new book by Brian McLaren, [Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road](#). Besides presenting a constructive view of engagement between persons of differing faiths, McLaren also invites engagement with persons outside traditional religion including those with backgrounds and experiences focusing on science. As he puts it, we need to invite others to “what we might call an *alter call* instead of an *altar call*,” to sharing our living faith instead of abstract ideas and doctrines in hostile debate. For McLaren, this sharing “is never a one-way street. It is always about receiving as well as giving. In generosity, we freely share our treasures with people of other faiths, *without requiring them convert*. And in that same spirit, we gratefully receive the treasures generously offered to us by other faiths – without needing to convert. So we Christians generously share our treasures with others, and we receive the gifts generously offered to us by Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, agnostics, atheists and others” (p. 262, italics in the original text). Since our start, WesleyNexus has been striving to promote this kind of open, respectful and constructive dialogue across the spectrum of science and religion. We invite you to join us in meaningful conversation and perhaps, through this engagement, alter our understanding and enrich our faith.

Below you will find a number of articles that might help you in this process of alteration. As always, if you have any articles that we can share, let us know. We can post them on the website and include them in next month’s newsletter. You may email us at WesleyNexus@aol.com.

One note before we go any further:

The scheduled August 18 appearance at Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church in Washington, DC of Dr. David Wilkinson, Principal of St. John’s College and Lecturer at Durham University, UK, has been canceled. Dr. Wilkinson’s United States tour has been postponed due to family obligations in the UK.

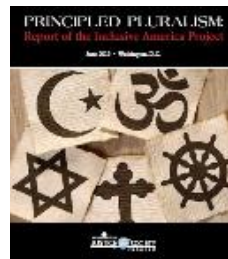


God Bless,

Rick Barr, WesleyNexus

Principled Pluralism: The Challenge Of Religious Diversity In 21st Century America

One of the persons to endorse McLeran's book was Eboo Patel. As posted on Huffington Post," Eboo Patel is the founder and Executive Director of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), a Chicago-based institution building the global interfaith youth movement. Author of the award-winning book **Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation**, Patel is also a regular contributor to the Washington Post, National Public Radio and CNN. He is a member of President Obama's Advisory Council of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and holds a doctorate in the sociology of religion from Oxford University, where he studied on a Rhodes scholarship." In "**Principled Pluralism: The Challenge Of Religious Diversity In 21st Century America**," with co-authors Jim Wallis and Meryl Chertoff, Patel addresses McLeran's challenge of engaged pluralism. In the article, the authors refer to the Aspen Institute Ideas Festival that took place the beginning of July. The Festival promoted the idea of "principled pluralism" as intentional approach to positively engage matters of religion. A detailed explanation of principled pluralism can be found in the referenced report: [Principled Pluralism: Report of the Inclusive America](#).



The Huffington Post article can be found [here](#).

A Church That Embraces All Religions and Rejects 'Us' vs. 'Them

A recent article in the NY Times reflects a particular faith community's effort to engage persons from varied faith backgrounds and religious differences. The Living Interfaith Church <http://livinginterfaith.org/> in Lynnwood, WA spans a wide range of perspectives in an atmosphere of mutual support. Though they do have a commitment to "[six fundamental assumptions](#)" and post a mission statement and bylaws, the church congregation presents itself as having a very eclectic constituency, drawing from diverse resources as Bahai, Shinto, Sikh, Hindu and Wiccan traditions, and from various humanist sources. It should be noted that the congregation is quite small, totaling under 50 regular worshippers. The NY Times article can be found [here](#).

Nazarenes Exploring Evolution

Many people within the Methodist tradition have never had a problem integrating biological evolution with their Christian faith. However, for many denominations within the broader Wesleyan tradition, engaging and integrating the findings of biology into their worldview is more challenging. The Church of the Nazarene is one such denomination. Forming in the first third of the 20th century, the Nazarenes reflect many of the Holiness roots from which they spring. In a recent conference, "The Nazarenes Exploring Evolution", they considered various questions concerning the compatibility or incompatibility of evolution and Christian theology in the Wesleyan tradition. It was hosted by Point Loma Nazarene University and co-sponsored by the Nazarenes Exploring Evolution project. Essays from the conference can be found [here](#).

NAZARENES EXPLORING EVOLUTION

Note: WesleyNexus does not endorse any of the views presented at the conference but applauds those within the Church of the Nazarene willing to engage others in their denomination to think about the issues evolution raises.

What Scientists Get, and Theologians Don't, About Thomas F. Torrance

Thomas Torrance was born 100 years ago and is still a thinker of significance in the science and religion dialogue. Orthodox theology and critical appreciation of the scientific enterprise found a home in his thinking. A recent article in First Thing by Todd Speidell presents Torrance as a realistic theologian, conversant with the concepts and methods



of science and an advocate for ecumenical engagement across sectarian lines. As Speidell states, "given Torrance's unusual status as a creative and positive theologian who engaged in dialogue with theologians and scientists alike, especially in articulating deep and profound connections between the ancient Fathers and modern physicists, he deserves a serious reading by thoughtful Christians across the ecumenical spectrum." The article can be found [here](#).

Articles by LeRon Shults

LeRon Shults is Professor of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Agder in Norway. He has a Ph. D. from Princeton Theological Seminary and is the recipient of a research fellowship from the Templeton Foundation. He is a very productive scholar with numerous books and articles to his credit.



He has posted three of his articles on his website, "Spiritual Entanglement," "Transforming Religious Plurality" and "Religious Symbolism at the Limits of Human Engagement". These articles are quite challenging but worth the effort. Shults is also the author of the 2008, *Christology and Science* which addresses how Christology can be understood in an age dominated by science. These articles can be found [here](#).

Summer Event Reminders

Science and Religion at the Smithsonian

On Friday, July 26, 2013 from 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm in the Worldwide Theater in the Hall of Human Origins at the Natural History Museum in Washington, DC, there will be an open discussion of the relationship between scientific and religious perspectives concerning human origins. The event is free and no tickets are required. For those of you who are not able to go the Smithsonian in person, check out "A Primer on Science, Religion, Evolution and Creationism" which can be found online [here](#).



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

From July 27 to August 3, 2013, The Institute for Religion in the 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 Sol



The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science 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. WesleyNexus President, Dr. E. Maynard Moore, will be presenting a Workshop, as will Dr. Jerry Josties, a regular participant in our local science and religion discussion groups. To see the full conference program and abstracts of the Conference papers, go to <http://www.iras.org/2013.html>.

Science and Religion Forum

In England, the University of Chester will convene a conference on Chance and



Providence?: Religious Perspectives on Divine Action. It will take place from September 5 -7. The keynote Gowland lecture will be given by Philip Clayton, Dean of Claremont School of Theology and Provost of Claremont Lincoln University in Claremont, CA. Additional speakers will be Mark Harris, Daniel Langton, Bethany Sollereder, Rabie E Abdul-Halim, and Christopher Knight. Information on the conference can be found [here](#).

