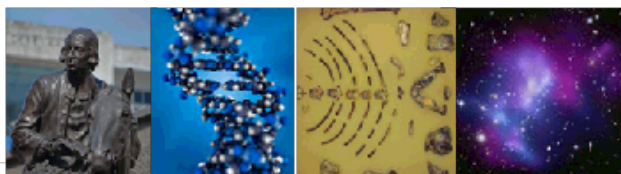


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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August 25, 2013

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

As the summer winds down, I would like to highlight a few events and articles that you may find of interest. 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.

God Bless,

Rick Barr, WesleyNexus

Six Week Course in Science and Religion

Dr. Philip Clayton, along with Tripp Fuller, is offering a six week internet course on Science and Religion. The course will provide an introduction to the subject for laypeople, ministers, and students. Dr. Clayton is the author of more than 20 books and is recognized as an international leader in the dialogue between science and religion, scholar on the future of faith, and activist in emerging Christianity. Tripp Fuller is a youth minister and co-founder of HomebrewedChristianity.com, the cutting-edge emergent Christian site for equipping grassroots theologians for creative thinking, engaging, and living.



The course will begin on September 9th and run through October 14th. You can find more information [here](#).

Alert for AAR/SBL attendees

The 2013 meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature are scheduled for the Baltimore Convention Center beginning on November 22. In conjunction with the 200th Anniversary of Old Otterbein Church (in downtown Baltimore next to the Convention Center, 112 W. Conway Street), WesleyNexus will be organizing a free seminar and special presentation on the evening of Thursday November 21st. The discussion topic will be "Is Evolution the Enemy of Faith?" Panelists will include WesleyNexus Advisory Board member Dr. Thomas Jay Oord, Professor of Theology at Northwestern Nazarene University, Craig A. Boyd, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University, and Mark A. Mann, Associate Professor of Theology at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. The session will begin with a light supper at 6:00 p.m., and the program runs from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The historic church is within one block walking distance from the convention

hotels, and all AAR/SBL members are welcome, as well as members of the public. More information will be forthcoming in future newsletters. Meanwhile, please share this information with anyone planning to attend the AAR/SBL meetings so that flights can be arranged to arrive at BWI on Nov 21st.

Opportunities and Challenges of Teaching Big History

Join Metanexus in exploring the benefits of teaching Big History and the challenges of its implementation. Share their vision for popularizing this emerging global perspective and join in the developing conversation. Big History is a narrative account of the 13.7 billion-year history of our universe, the 4.5 billion-year evolution of our planet, the 6 million-year rise of our species, and the 10,000-year accelerating drama of human civilization. The program will be hosted by three leaders of the field: David Christian, Bob Bain, and William Grassie. It will take place at the Harvard Club in New York, NY on September 21. Registration information can be found [here](#).



Painting the Stars: Science, Religion and Evolving Faith

Living the Questions is an organization dedicated to the development of instructional materials to meet the real world needs of pastors and their congregations. The organization was founded by David Felten and Jeff Procter-Murphy, both of whom serve United Methodist congregations in Arizona. Rev. Felten was trained at Boston University School of Theology and Rev. Procter-Murphy at Claremont School of Theology. Their most recent program is Painting the Stars: Science, Religion and Evolving Faith. "Celebrating the communion of science and faith." Painting the Stars explores the promise of evolutionary Christian spirituality. Featuring over a dozen leading theologians and progressive thinkers, the seven-session program includes a downloadable/printable participant reader (written by evolutionary theologian Bruce Sanguin) and a facilitator guide with discussion questions. For more information and to see video sample go to <http://www.livingthequestions.com/xcart/home.php?cat=485>



Jesus, Jazz and Buddhism: Process Thinking For A More Hospitable World

Jesus, Jazz and Buddhism (JJB) is a website supporting an "informal community of scholars, artists and friends who are interested in helping create a more hospitable world with help from process or relational thinking." Influenced by the organic philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, participants engage in conversations and explorations into the many ways Whitehead's relational philosophy can "build bridges between cultures, between religion and science, between tradition and a constructively postmodern future". Contributors include John Cobb and Marjorie Suchocki, both with deep roots in the United Methodist Church. JJB can be found [here](#).



(From <http://www.jesusjazzbuddhism.org/art-and-music.html>)

Steven Pinker Gets People Talking

In a recent article published in The New Republic, Steven Pinker, the Johnstone Family Professor in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University, created quite a buzz by addressing the charge of scientism leveled against him and others by persons in the humanities and religion. For Pinker,



”the worldview that guides the moral and spiritual values of an educated person today is the worldview given to us by science.” It has shown that the “belief systems of all the world’s traditional religions and cultures—their theories of the origins of life, humans, and societies—are factually mistaken.”

Needless to say, not everyone agrees with his assessment. The article can be found [here](#) with a NY Times reply by Ross Douhat available [here](#).

Also from across the pond, see Seven Poole’s response [here](#).

Should Creationism Be Controversial?

A week after the commotion started by Steven Pinker’s article, the Washington Post hosted a conversation between seven writers on the issue of science and creation. You can find all seven articles [here](#) as well as dozens of comments by readers.



Christian Century Focuses on Climate Change

The August 21st issue of The Christian Century has a cover story by Eileen Flanagan focusing on the issues of ecological justice, climate change and poverty that is impinging on the life of millions on the African continent.



Weather patterns are changing and forcing many to respond to a new normal. As Flanagan points out, blaming climate change for these new challenges is “tricky” and is viewed as a contributing factor rather than cause. But change is happening, placing huge pressures on those struggling to sustain life. The article can be found [here](#).

Rainbow Mountains

One point of contact between science and religion is in aesthetic appreciation of the natural world. Who among us has not felt close to the sacred when encountering the beauty of nature? Even photographs can portray the awesomeness of creation, though always coming up short of the true experience. In a recent article, the Huffington Post presented pictures of the Rainbow Mountains in China's Danxia Landform Geological Park. I had never heard of them but after viewing the pictures, will never forget them. I can only imagine what it is like to see them in person. The article and pictures can be found [here](#).



Robert Bellah’s Contributions to the Study of Religion

As many of you know, Robert Bellah, one of the leading

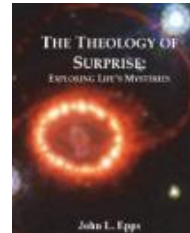
scholars in the study of religion over the past decade, died recently. Over the coming weeks and month there will be numerous articles written about his contributions. A few weeks ago, Mark Juergensmeyer, a student of Bellah's in the 1960s and now Professor of Sociology at UC – Santa Barba



account about

The Theology of Surprise

A new book just out, *The Theology of Surprise: Exploring Life's Mysteries* by John L. Epps, is available from www.ResurgencePublishing.com (ISBN: 9780-9850458-38). Dr. Maynard Moore, President of WesleyNexus, Inc., has written the following among the endorsements for the book: "If you are religious because



you treasure 'eternal verities,' if you are happy that 'on solid rock I stand,' this book is probably not for you. But if you acknowledge that one essential component of Revelation is 'unexpected encounter,' and if you are humble enough to lay your faith down before the Mystery of Life, you will want to read this book. Epps is both wise about the tradition in which we stand and creative in his own response to the possibilities open to authentic faith. If you are unfulfilled by dogmatic certainties calcified in archaic language, you will benefit greatly by Epps' observations about theological surprise. These ideas will enrich your journey of faith." The book is available at a discount from the publisher if you identify yourself as a participant in the WesleyNexus dialogue community.

Welcome to the Age of Denial

Adam Frank, a professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Rochester, and author of "About Time: Cosmology and Culture at the Twilight of the Big Bang" has written a thoughtful article in the NY Times. He reminds us that we should not take the acceptance of science for granted and that in the current moment "it is politically effective, and socially acceptable, to deny scientific fact... And as we know from history's darkest moments, even the most enlightened traditions can be broken and lost. Perhaps that is the most important lesson all lifelong students of science must learn now." Find the article [here](#).

