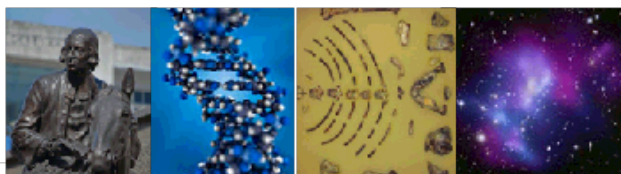


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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November 30, 2013

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

As we begin the holiday season with Thanksgiving, Hanukah, Kwanza, Christmas and New Year's Day, I want to thank you all for being part of the WesleyNexus network. Though electronic media is by nature impersonal, it is also a way to connect to persons with events and information not possible just a decade ago. We at WesleyNexus continue to work towards critical understanding and creative dialogue between scientific and religious understanding. Though most of you are geographically distant and not able to take part in programs that we sponsor in the Washington, DC area, we hope you find us a valuable resource for your own networks. Science and religion dialogue is more than getting the best, most up-to-date information but also about engaging with others on how to integrate information into our daily lives. Please keep in touch through our email at WesleyNexus@aol.com. Have a wonderful, holiday season.

God Bless,

Rick Barr, WesleyNexus

Newsletter

WesleyNexus Sponsors Science and Religion Discussion in Baltimore

As noted in last month's newsletter, WesleyNexus sponsored a free seminar/discussion on November 21 in conjunction with the 200th Anniversary of the death of Philip William Otterbein at Old Otterbein UMC in Baltimore. Here are some pictures of the event paneled by 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 WesleyNexus sponsored event was scheduled to coincide with the convening in Baltimore of the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. The following day, several of our Board members and participants attended a series of meetings at the

Convention Center sponsored by the International Society for Science and Religion, coordinated by Dr. Ron Cole-Turner of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Through a series of eight sessions over a 24-hour period, the theme addressed was: “New Challenges in Science and Religion,” and featured presentations by more than twenty scholars, including Dr. Philip Clayton, Dr. Wentzel van Huyssteen, Dr. Robert J. Russell, Dr. Niels Gregersen, Dr. Michael Spezio, and Dr. Ted Peters, among others. Perhaps the most intriguing “new challenge” comes from the recent research from paleoanthropology as it discovers “human pregenitors” among the widening species of hominins, and new theses in “Religion and Neuroscience on Emotion, Reason and Character in Community.”

WesleyNexus To Co-Sponsor Second Annual Evolution Weekend Event

Last year’s Evolution Weekend program presented at the United Methodist Baltimore-Washington Conference Mission Center was a great success with well over 100 people in attendance to hear Nobel Prize winner John Mather, Connie Bertka, Rabbi George Driesen and Tom Burnett address the topic “Evolving Universe, Evolving Faith” (last year’s flyer can be found here. http://www.wesnexus.org/Flyer_EvolvingUniverse_2013.pdf). This year we plan to build on this success by presenting the second annual Evolution Weekend program at the BWC Mission Center on February 9, 2014. Our panel of respondents, not finalized at this time, will be addressing the theme “Daddy, is this story true or were you just preaching? How different orders of truth and faith inform each other.” We are in the middle of the planning and coordination process and will be communicating event details as they become finalized. We hope many of you around the country are planning similar events in churches for Evolution Week-end, and we ask that you let us know about these so that we can post the appropriate links on our website and include notices in our January newsletter. Please let us know your plans.

The Three Values of Science

A recent article in Real Clear Science highlights a 1963 talk at the University of Washington where physicist Richard Feynman identified three values of science:

- 1) the ability to “do all kinds of things”
- 2) intellectual enjoyment, and
- 3) to experience the freedom to doubt.

That last value is perhaps the most important and one that should be imported to the science and religion dialogue and religious thinking in general. The article can be found [here](#).



Pope Francis on the Science and Religion Dialogue

Pope Francis continues to make the headlines talking about compassion and social justice. However, in a recent posted document called “APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY, CONSECRATED PERSONS AND THE LAY FAITHFUL ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN TODAY’S WORLD” there is a short but clear statement concerning the relationship between science and religion. Far from being a threat to the faith, science, when viewed responsibly, “all of society can be enriched thanks to this dialogue, which opens up new horizons for thought and expands the

possibilities of reason. This, too, is a path of harmony and peace.” Just two paragraphs long, this papal statement is worthy further contemplation. It can be found [here](#) in section 242 on page 181.

Claremont Short Course Video Available Online

The course offered by Philip Clayton and Tripp Fuller covering a broad range of science and religion topics is available online at the six web addresses below. Given to both a classroom at Claremont School of Theology and to the live web audience, these six sessions provide a new resource for groups and individuals to get familiar with all about. These sessions can be found here:



[Nature of Faith for Ordinary People](#)

[Physics and Cosmology](#)

[Biology, Origins and Evolution](#)

[Origins, Development and Mind](#)

[Theological Reflection](#)

[Ethical Dimensions](#)

(Note: Titles assigned are mine due to videos being unlabeled.)



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AAAS in Washington, DC to Host Holiday Program with Krista Tippett

On December 11 at 5:30, DoSER, the Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, will be hosting an evening with Krista Tippett called “Conversations: Science, Scientists, and the Human Spirit”. Ms. Tippett is “the Peabody Award-winning host of “On Being,” a public radio show heard on nearly 300 stations. She is also the author of two books,



[Einstein’s God: Conversations About Science and the Human Spirit](#) and [Speaking of Faith: Why Religion Matters and How to Talk About It.](#) You can get more information on the program [here](#).

Mainline Protestants Don’t Water Down Their Faith

An interesting and provocative editorial was written recently by Rev. Scott Dalgarno pastor of Wasatch Presbyterian Church in Salt Lake City, challenging the assertion in an earlier article in the Salt Lake Tribune ([found here](#))



<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/lifestyle/57001613-80/mainline-church-christian-churches.html.csp>

that mainline churches offer watered down religion, which therefore is meaningless, at least according to Steven Hunter, a critic of the mainline churches quoted in that article. Dalgarno recommends that we take a “page from Pope Francis (and one of his predecessors, Pope John XXIII, 1958-1963). Stated simply, they both showed the face of Jesus to a spiritually hungry world.” It is interesting that the Papal exhortation affirming science in its proper role came out the same week. The editorial can be found [here](#).

Peter Berger Blogs on Denominational Imperative

Sociologist Peter Berger reflected on the recent article on the growth of atheist mega-churches highlighting the unique and ubiquitous feature of American religious practice: denominationalism. The denominational imperative reflects our social commitment to pluralism, volunteerism and religious freedom. “The denomination is protected in a pluralist situation by the political and legal guarantee of religious freedom. Pluralism is the product of powerful forces of modernity—urbanization, migration, mass literacy and education; it can exist without religious freedom, but the latter clearly enhances it. While Niebuhr was right in seeing the denomination as primarily an American invention, it has now become globalized—because pluralism has become a global fact.” You can read this article [here](#).



